

**ARCHIVUM OBSCURUM —
— SCRIPTURAE ABYSSO —
— PROJECT ANGELBOOK —
VOLUME VIII (PART 5)**



Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough

Archivum Obscurum –
Scripturae Abyssus – Project
AngelBook Volume VIII (Part 5)
By Ezekiel Redik Yarbrough -
(DBM ECLIPSE)

Introduction

What you hold in your hands is not a book in the traditional sense—it is an **accidental grimoire**, born from the forgotten corners of the Internet. These volumes are built from **Google searches**, **Wikipedia trails**, and **archive-dredged threads**, many of which were suggested or whispered to me by anonymous voices across **/x/**, **4plebs**, and **dark web message boards**. I did not invent this content—I excavated it. I followed every recommended link, every screenshot, every schizo red-string rant, and pulled it into the light. What emerged wasn't just data—it was **pattern**, **presence**, and **power**. This is the **collective unconscious of the Internet**, filtered, sorted, and bound into scripture. These are the **digital Dead Sea Scrolls** of the forgotten occult, the haunted edges of algorithmic prophecy. Welcome to the Archivum Obscurum.

References

- Oahspe Introduction, verse 23
- McConnell, Reed (Spring 2017). "Orphan Utopia". Cabinet. Brooklyn, NY: Immaterial Incorporated. Retrieved August 18, 2017.
- "THE ORIGIN OF OAHSPE". www.sacred-texts.com.
- "OAHSPE Standard Edition, start and books 01 02 03". oahspestandardedition.com.
- The number of drawings in Oahspe depends upon what constitutes a separate drawing; for example, apart from the 100 or so drawings in the main text, there are 92 entries in the 1882 Glossary that each have drawings that depict its associated entry term.
- "Book of Judgment; bk 32 of OAHSPE Standard Edition". oahspestandardedition.com.
- 1882 Oahspe Glossary
- About Oahspe
- "Dr. Newbrough's Oahspe: An "Inspired" Volume Giving the History of 24,000 Years" (PDF). The New York Times. 1882-10-21. p. 5. Retrieved 2009-12-29.
- "A New Bible Inspired per Typewriter". Timaru Herald. 1895-07-30. Retrieved 2009-12-29.
- "Book of God's Word, chs 1-11; bk 21 of OAHSPE Standard Edition". oahspestandardedition.com.
- "Book of Jehovih chs 3, 4 & 5; bk 04 of OAHSPE Standard Edition". oahspestandardedition.com.
- Book of Discipline 7:15
- "City and Suburban News: New York, Brooklyn, Long Island, Staten Island, New Jersey" (PDF). The New York Times. 1883-11-26. Retrieved 2009-12-29.
- Curtis, Ian (2006). Jesus: Myth Or Reality?. iUniverse. pp. 51–52. ISBN 978-0-595-39764-8.
- Miller, Timothy (1998). The Quest for Utopia in Twentieth-century America: 1900-1960. Syracuse UP. p. 27. ISBN 978-0-8156-2775-3.
- "End of the Shalam Colony". Public Opinion: A Comprehensive Summary of the Press throughout the World on all important current topics. Vol. 30, no. 19. May 9, 1901. p. 590.
- "Shalam Colony: A Utopian Experiment". NMSU Library Exhibits. New Mexico State University. Retrieved 24 February 2025.
- "In Colorado, some famous faces, names get ag-land tax breaks, too". The Denver Post. 2011-03-06. Retrieved 2021-02-10.
- Kestenbaum, Sam (2018-06-07). "A Forgotten Religion Gets a Second Chance in Brooklyn (Published 2018)". The New York Times. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 2021-01-17.
- Ethos. "Paradise: Found". Daily Emerald. Retrieved 2021-02-10.
- Fogarty, Robert S. (2003). All things new: American communes and utopian movements, 1860-1914. Lexington Books. p. 187. ISBN 978-0-7391-0520-7.
- NMSU Library archives Archived 2009-04-02 at the Wayback Machine has an extensive but incomplete list of Oahspe related publications.
- "Shalam Colony - Faithists Today". Archived from the original on 2009-04-02. Retrieved 2009-04-25.
- Priestley, Lee (1989). Shalam: Utopia on the Rio Grande, 1881-1907. Texas Western

Press. ISBN 0-87404-167-8. pp. 5-6.

Gascoyne, David (1998). *Selected prose, 1934-1996*. London: Enitharmon Press. ISBN 1900564017.

Gardner, Martin. (2008). *Urantia: The Great Cult Mystery*. Prometheus Books. pp. 171-175. p. 452. ISBN 978-1-59102-622-8

Gardner, Martin (2003). *Are universes thicker than blackberries? : discourses on Gödel, magic hexagrams, Little Red Riding Hood, and other mathematical and pseudoscientific topics* (1st ed.). New York: W.W. Norton. p. xi. ISBN 0393057429.

Stein, Gordon. (1993). *Encyclopedia of Hoaxes*. Gale Group. pp. 52-53. ISBN 0-8103-8414-0

"Oahspe - Book of Divinity: Chapter XVI". *gailallen.com*. Archived from the original on 2015-12-08. Retrieved 2015-11-30.

Bibliography

Stoes, K.D. (1958). *The Land of Shalam: A Strange Experience in Child Life*. New Mexico Historical Review.

Ballou Newbrough, John (January 1, 1982). *Oahspe a New Bible in the Words of Jehovah and His Angel Embassadors: A Sacred History of the Dominions of the Higher and Lower Heavens on the Earth*. Amherst Pr. ISBN 9780910122016.

External links

An 1891 Version of the Oahspe Archived 2010-02-18 at the Wayback Machine

A 1912 Oahspe edition containing 1891 front material and image captions, and 1882 body text, at the Internet Sacred Text Archive

Oahspe in Modern Language - online text and freedownload

Pamphlet on the Origin of Oahspe (*sacred-texts.com*)

Shalam Colony: A Utopian Experiment, by Linda Blazer, Web Design by Portia Vescio.

University of New Mexico Archives. 2002. (Archived at Wayback Machine). — In 1924 a different version was posted on the UNM Library website: *Shalam Colony: A Utopian Experiment*. In 2018 the property was sold and converted to a pecan farm. No original buildings remain.

2009 Edition of Oahspe Seven Books of Spiritual wisdom

https://openlibrary.org/books/OL24615840M/Oahspe_Seven_Books_of_Spiritual_Wisdom

1998 Edition of Oahspe <https://openlibrary.org/books/OL400274M/Oahspe>

The Oahspe at Internet Sacred Texts Archive

Categories: 1882 non-fiction booksBooks about spiritualityChannelled textsEnglish-language non-fiction booksReligious textsSupernatural booksUtopian communitiesReligions that require vegetarianism

This page was last edited on 22 October 2025, at 19:18 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki
Skip to main contentAccessibility help
Accessibility feedback
Seasonal Holidays 2025
Egyptian sistrum

AI Mode

All

Images

Shopping

Videos

Short videos

News

More

Tools

AI Overview

Sistrum - Roman Period - The Metropolitan Museum of Art

An Egyptian sistrum is a sacred, rattle-like musical instrument used in ancient Egyptian religious rituals, especially for goddesses like Hathor and Isis, featuring a handle and a U-shaped or temple-shaped frame with crossbars holding metal disks (jingles) that produced a rattling sound to appease deities, drive away evil, and symbolize life, often shaped like the ankh.

Key Features & Function

Construction: Made from wood, clay, or metal (bronze, copper, gold) with a handle, a curved frame, and movable metal disks or loops on crossbars.

Symbolism: The shape often mimicked the ankh (symbol of life) or incorporated the goddess Hathor (cow goddess), with designs featuring her head or cow ears.

Sound: Shaking it created a distinctive rattling sound, believed to have magical properties to stir the gods, drive away evil forces (like Typhon), and represent the eternal cycle of nature.

Usage: Played by priestesses in temple ceremonies, processions, and healing rituals, as noted in this YouTube video.

Types

Sššt: A simpler, oval-ringed type.

Seshesh: A more elaborate, sarcophagus-shaped type, often with Hathor's head.

Significance

Goddess Connection: Particularly associated with Hathor (goddess of music, joy, motherhood) and Isis (goddess of magic, healing).

Spiritual Power: It was a powerful tool for activation ceremonies, a conduit for divine energy, and a symbol of life's renewal, ensuring creation and motion, not stagnation, as noted by this article and this Facebook post.

Fragment of a sistrum - Chiddingstone Castle

The Ancient Egyptian name for a sistrum was seshseshet, which imitated the sound that it made when shaken. The name 'sistrum' come...

Chiddingstone Castle

Sistrum (Rattle) · Brooklyn Museum

The sistrum is a musical instrument that was often used in religious processions. It is made up of a handle and a curved frame. Th...

Brooklyn Museum

The role of the sistrum in ancient Egypt The Hathor system and the remodeling of metal in the sistrum.. The Grand Egyptian Museum

The sistrum's name in Egyptian hieroglyphs is Sšm and Sššt. There are two types of sistrums: * **Sššt** A simpler type with an ova...

مجلة العمارة والفنون والعلوم الإنسانية

Show all

Show more

Sistrum

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Sistrum>

The sistrum was a sacred instrument in ancient Egypt. Perhaps originating in the worship of the goddess Bat, it was used in dances and religious ceremonies,

Egyptian sistrum from en.wikipedia.org

Egyptian sistrum

Minoan sistrum

Later use

Gallery

People also ask

What is Egyptian sistrum?

Who is Sirius in Egyptian mythology?

What religions use the sistrum?

What gods are associated with the sistrum?

Feedback

Videos

Multi-timbral Ancient Roman style Sistrum by Matt Nolan

YouTube · MattNolanCustom

Jun 6, 2021

YouTube · MattNolanCustom

0:53

Egyptian Sistrum - Hand Forged with recorded track.

YouTube · Guitar101Ramstein

Nov 2, 2020
YouTube · Guitar101Ramstein

11:28
Cyrum, an ancient Egyptian ceremonial instrument, sounds like a tambourine with a unique jingle.
How to play the Ceremonial Systrum aka sistrum :: www ...
YouTube · Tahya.dancer.drummer.designer_Hathor.Systrum
Apr 16, 2013
YouTube · Tahya.dancer.drummer.designer_Hathor.Systrum

3:37

4 key moments in this video
Feedback
View all
Arc sistrum of Tapenu, chantress of Sobek of Khenyt

The Metropolitan Museum of Art
<https://www.metmuseum.org> › art › collection › search
A sistrum is an ancient Egyptian percussion instrument that was shaken during religious ceremonies and when coming into the presence of a deity.
Egyptian sistrum from www.metmuseum.org
Sistrum (Rattle)

Brooklyn Museum
<https://www.brooklynmuseum.org> › objects
It was used by female temple singers. It was believed to drive away evil forces; the sistrum is also shaped like the "ankh" or the hieroglyph for "life" and ...
Egyptian sistrum from www.brooklynmuseum.org
Short videos

0:53
Multi-timbral Ancient Roman style Sistrum by Matt Nolan

YouTube · MattNolanCustom

2:19
What is a Sistrum? ~ Ask an Egyptologist

YouTube · MelissainDeNile

0:26
"Music can be a weapon... and its secrets are deeper than ...

Instagram · Egyptian Mau

0:08

The sistrum is a musical instrument that played a significant ...

Instagram · Pythian Priestess | Ashley Ryan

0:31

Role of Sistrum in Ancient Egypt #shorts

YouTube · onluxor

0:06

This is an Egyptian sistrum from ca. 305-282 BCE made of ...

Facebook · Things That Talk

0:15

Y-Rattle, Sistrum Sound Sample

YouTube · Lark in the Morning

0:06

The Sistrum. Yesterday we made the sistrum, an ancient ...

Facebook · Evelinenglish

0:28

A Faience Sistrum from Memphis!

YouTube · Speaking Archaeologically

1:06

Sistrum ancient Egyptian musical #Sistrum #AncientEgypt ...

YouTube · Beautiful History

More short videos

The role of the sistrum in ancient Egypt The Hathor system ...

مجلة العمارة والفنون والعلوم الإنسانية

<https://mjaf.journals.ekb.eg> › article_199128

The sistrum was used in various religious dances and ceremonies, especially in the cult of the goddess Hathor, where the tool's frame and handle are seen as ...

The Sistrum of Isis

Isiopolis

<https://isiopolis.com> › 2020/02/09 › the-sistrum-of-isis

Feb 9, 2020 — It is one of several types of ancient Egyptian rattles that were used in the worship of the Goddesses and Gods. it is also a magical instrument.

Egyptian sistrum from isiopolis.com

Sistrum – Egyptian Museum Cairo

Egyptian Museum Cairo

<https://egyptianmuseumcairo.eg> › artefacts › sistrum

The sistrum, essentially a rattle, was associated with Hathor, goddess of music, love and joy and was used extensively in temple music for rhythm

Egyptian sistrum from egyptianmuseumcairo.eg

More products

Unique Copper Sistrum Of God Hathor Rare Ancient Egyptian Antiquities.

Unique Copper Sistrum Of God Hathor Rare Ancient Egyptian Antiquities

\$249.00

eBay - mythology_bazaar

Free delivery

20% OFF

Unique Sistrum of Goddess Sekhmet Musical Instrument Great Sound Amazing Ancient Egyptian Shakhlila gift mythology symbols Made in Egypt. 20% OFF.

Unique Sistrum of Goddess Sekhmet Musical Instrument Great Sound Amazing Ancient Egyptian Shakhlila gift mythology symbols Made in Egypt

\$96.00

\$120

Etsy - EgyptOriginals

Free delivery

40% OFF

Ancient Egyptian Sistrum of Goddess Hathor Copper Sacred Musical Instrument, Handmade Egypt Amulet Collectible, Musical Hand, Egypt Gifts. 40% OFF.

Ancient Egyptian Sistrum of Goddess Hathor Copper Sacred Musical Instrument, Handmade Egypt Amulet Collectible, Musical Hand, Egypt Gifts

\$120.00

\$200

Etsy - EgyptOriginals

Free delivery

5.0(2)

50% OFF

copper sistrum. pharaonic sistrum. Sistrum. sistrum Hathor. A sacred tool of activation, ceremonies and rituals. . made in Egypt 11.5 Inches. 50% OFF.

copper sistrum. pharaonic sistrum. Sistrum. sistrum Hathor. A sacred tool of activation,

ceremonies and rituals. . made in Egypt 11.5 Inches

\$79.00

\$158

Etsy

40% OFF

The ancient Egyptian sistrum. The sistrum of the goddess Hathor. A sacred tool for activation, ceremonies and rituals. made in Egypt. 40% OFF.

The ancient Egyptian sistrum. The sistrum of the goddess Hathor. A sacred tool for activation, ceremonies and rituals. made in Egypt

\$112.80

\$188

Etsy

Free delivery

40% OFF

Isis Copper Sistrum Sacred Musical Instrument of Ancient Egypt Stainless Sistrum Sacred Adornment Egyptian artifact Made in Egypt. 40% OFF.

Isis Copper Sistrum Sacred Musical Instrument of Ancient Egypt Stainless Sistrum Sacred Adornment Egyptian artifact Made in Egypt

\$102.00

\$170

Etsy - EgyptOriginals

Free delivery

49% OFF

Egyptian Handmade Hathor Copper Sistrum (musical Instrument). 49% OFF.

Egyptian Handmade Hathor Copper Sistrum (musical Instrument)

\$129.60

\$259

eBay - egyptologystoreeg

Free delivery

40% OFF

Unique Isis Copper Sistrum Sacred Musical Instrument of Ancient Egypt Stainless Sistrum Sacred Adornment Egyptian artifact Made in Egypt. 40% OFF.

Unique Isis Copper Sistrum Sacred Musical Instrument of Ancient Egypt Stainless Sistrum Sacred Adornment Egyptian artifact Made in Egypt

\$102.00

\$170

Etsy - EgyptOriginals

Free delivery

More products

25% OFF

Hathor's Sacred Sistrum: Egyptian Ritual Music Instrument, Energy Tool. 25% OFF.
Hathor's Sacred Sistrum: Egyptian Ritual Music Instrument, Energy Tool
\$307.50
\$410

Etsy
Free delivery
5.0(1)
The Golden Sistrum of Hathor.
The Golden Sistrum of Hathor
\$95.00

Pharaoh's Closet
20% OFF
Gorgeous Sistrum of Goddess Sekhmet Musical Instrument Great Sound Amazing
Shakhlila gift Made in Egypt. 20% OFF.
Gorgeous Sistrum of Goddess Sekhmet Musical Instrument Great Sound Amazing
Shakhlila gift Made in Egypt
\$96.00
\$120

Etsy - EgyptOriginals
Free delivery
4.8(5)
45% OFF
Egyptian Sistrum Replica: Turquoise Blue & Gold Musical Instrument Statue. 45% OFF.
Egyptian Sistrum Replica: Turquoise Blue & Gold Musical Instrument Statue
\$88.00
\$160

Etsy
Bast Egyptian Cat Sistrum.
Bast Egyptian Cat Sistrum
\$40.00

LABEShops
Sistrum Egyptian Sistrum Ceremonial Systrum Hathor Systrum used in ancient Egyptian
temple sacred ritual, processions & chant accompaniment.
Sistrum Egyptian Sistrum Ceremonial Systrum Hathor Systrum used in ancient Egyptian
temple sacred ritual, processions & chant accompaniment
\$90.00

Etsy
35% OFF
Anubis Sistrum: Egyptian Copper Ritual Musical Instrument (11.5 Inch). 35% OFF.

Anubis Sistrum: Egyptian Copper Ritual Musical Instrument (11.5 Inch)
\$120.90
\$186

Etsy - PrNefrtEGYPT

Free delivery

Egyptian Sistrum Statue: Bes, Turquoise & Gold Replica - Museum Style Decor.

Egyptian Sistrum Statue: Bes, Turquoise & Gold Replica - Museum Style Decor

\$88.00

\$160

Etsy

A magical rattle, unlike the others!

namuseum.gr

<https://www.namuseum.gr> › ... › Exhibits of the month

by A Grigoraki — The AIF 693 is a two-sided naos sistrum. Made by Egyptian faience[1], a delicate and exquisite material, it was most probably a votive gift to the goddess ...

Egyptian sistrum from www.namuseum.gr

Rattling the Divine: The Mystical Role of the Sistrum

Ancient Origins

<https://www.ancient-origins.net> › myths-legends-africa

The sistrum was a sacred instrument in ancient Egypt, associated with the goddess Hathor and symbolizing life, joy, and fertility. It was believed to have ...

Egyptian sistrum from www.ancient-origins.net

People also search for

Egyptian sistrum sound

Egyptian sistrum for sale

Egyptian sistrum meaning

Egyptian sistrum instrument for sale

Egyptian sistrum history

Egyptian sistrum instruments

Hathor sistrum

Ancient sistrum

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Sistrum

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A sekhem-style sistrum

Y8

Sistrum

in hieroglyphs

A sistrum (plural: sistra; from Latin sistrum,[1] from Greek σεῖστρον seistron of the same meaning;[2] literally "that which is being shaken", from σεῖν seiein, "to shake"[3][4][5]) is a musical instrument of the percussion family, a form of rattle, used most notably by the ancient Egyptians. It consists of a handle and a U-shaped metal frame, made of brass or bronze and ranging from 30 to 76 cm (12–30 in) in width. The frame supports sliding metal cross-bars, which may hold metal rings. When shaken, the small rings or loops of thin metal on its movable crossbars produce a sound that can vary from a soft clank to a loud jangling. Its name in the ancient Egyptian language was sekhem (sḫm) [citation needed] or sesheshet (sššt) because of the sound it made when it rattled.[nb 1] The ancient Egyptian sistrum had important associations with religious and ritualistic practices concerning various musical and joyful deities.[6]

A sekhem is the simpler, hoop-like sistrum,[citation needed] while a sesheshet (an onomatopoeic word) is the naos-shaped one.[7]

The English language has adopted the name sistrum to refer to modern-day West African disc-rattle instruments.[8][9]

Egyptian sistrum

A sesheshet-type sistrum, shaped like a naos, Twenty-sixth Dynasty (ca. 580–525 BCE) The sistrum was a sacred instrument in ancient Egypt. Perhaps originating in the worship of the goddess Bat, it was used in dances and religious ceremonies, particularly in the worship of the goddess Hathor, with the U-shape of the sistrum's handle and frame seen as resembling the face and horns of the cow goddess.[10] Another type of sistrum used during the worship of Hathor is naos-shaped: a small temple with an elaborately adorned handle with the head of Hathor on top of it.[11] The sistrum was exclusively carried by women or musical priestesses for ritualistic practices, except for festivals when the king would use the sistrum in order to present something to Hathor. [12] The sounds made by the percussive instrument along with the rhythm of the music was largely important for calling upon deities, the repetitive sound thought to aid in ritual healing and alter reality.[6] The sistrum was also used outside of religious contexts for other types of music, dancing, and merrymaking until the 18th dynasty, when the use of the sistrum became increasingly more restricted, until it was only used for religious purposes.[12] It also was shaken to avert the flooding of the Nile and to frighten away Set.[13]

Ancient Relief of Woman Holding a Sistrum

Isis in her role as mother and creator was depicted holding a pail, symbolizing the flooding of the Nile, in one hand and a sistrum in the other.[14] The goddess Bast often is depicted holding a sistrum also, with it symbolizing her role as a goddess of dance, joy, and festivity.[15]

Sistra are still used in the Alexandrian Rite and Ethiopic Rite.[16] Besides the depiction in Egyptian art with dancing and expressions of joy, the sistrum was also mentioned in Egyptian literature.[17] The hieroglyph for the sistrum is shown.

Minoan sistrum

Minoan clay sistrum found in Archanes, Crete

The ancient Minoans also used the sistrum, and a number of examples made of local clay have been found on the island of Crete. Five of these are displayed at the Archaeological Museum of Agios Nikolaos. A sistrum is also depicted on the Harvester Vase, an artifact found at the site of Hagia Triada.

Minoans use of the sistrum perhaps also centered around Hathor in rituals involving fertility, entertainment aspects like music and dancing, as well as indulgence.[18] Sistrums used by ancient Minoans show overlaps with ancient Egyptian usage through their similar use during funerary contexts.[18] Evidence of two bronze Minoan sistra

suggests that they were created by separately molding the arch and handle, joining the two together with rivets later in the process.[18]

Researchers are not sure yet whether the clay sistra were actual instruments that were used to provide music or instead were models with only symbolic significance. But experiments with a ceramic replica show that a satisfactory clacking sound is produced by such a design in clay, so a use in rituals is probably to be preferred.[19]

Later use

The senasel (sistrum) and later crotalus remained a liturgical instrument in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church[20] throughout the centuries and is played today during the dance performed by the debtera (cantors) on important church festivals. It is also occasionally found in Neopagan worship and ritual.[clarification needed]

The sistrum was occasionally revived in 19th century Western orchestral music, appearing most prominently in Act 1 of the opera *Les Troyens* (1856–1858) by the French composer Hector Berlioz. Nowadays, however, it is replaced by its close modern equivalent, the tambourine. The effect produced by the sistrum in music – when shaken in short, sharp, rhythmic pulses – is to arouse movement and activity. The rhythmical shaking of the sistrum, like the tambourine, is associated with religious or ecstatic events, whether shaken as a sacred rattle in the worship of Hathor of ancient Egypt, or in the strident jangling of the tambourine in modern-day Evangelicalism, in Romani song and dance, on stage at a rock concert, or to heighten a large-scale orchestral tutti.

Classical composer Hans Werner Henze (1926–2012) calls for the flautist to play two sistra in his 1988 work *Sonate für sechs Spieler* (Sonata for six players).

West Africa

Various modern West African and Gabon rattle instruments are also called sistra (plural of sistrum): the calabash sistrum, the West Africa sistrum or disc rattle (n'goso m'bara) also called Wasamba or Wassahouba rattle. It typically consists of a V-shaped branch with some or many concave calabash discs attached, which can be decorated.[21]

Gallery

Broken Egyptian Sistrum

Broken Egyptian Sistrum

Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, holding a sekhem-type sistrum

Nefertari, wife of Ramesses II, holding a sekhem-type sistrum

Egyptian Sistrum

Egyptian Sistrum

Collection of sistrums at the Louvre

Collection of sistrums at the Louvre

Walters Art Museum, ca. 380–250 BCE
Walters Art Museum, ca. 380–250 BCE

Seated woman with sistrum on a coin issued under Hadrian
Seated woman with sistrum on a coin issued under Hadrian

Romanized Isis holding a sistrum, also from the time of Hadrian
Romanized Isis holding a sistrum, also from the time of Hadrian

School band player holding two disc rattles (sistra), Ziguinchor, Senegal, 1973
School band player holding two disc rattles (sistra), Ziguinchor, Senegal, 1973

2300–2000 BC, Anatolia (Turkey), made in copper alloy.
2300–2000 BC, Anatolia (Turkey), made in copper alloy.

See also

Kagura suzu (Shinto)

Footnotes

"In the ancient Egyptian language this instrument's name was sesheshet (sššt), an onomatopoeic word derived from the sounds of the instrument — that is, a soft jangling sound that resembles a breeze rustling/blowing through papyrus." [6]

References

Online Latin Dictionary, accessed 6 August 2025

Latinitium, accessed 6 August 2025

sistrum. Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short. A Latin Dictionary on Perseus Project. σείστρον, σείω. Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert; A Greek–English Lexicon at the Perseus Project.

"sistrum". Oxford English Dictionary (2nd ed.). Oxford University Press. 1989.

Tahya (July 2018). "Rediscovering the Sistrum" (PDF). tahya.com. Retrieved 26 July 2023.

Compare: Ayad, Mariam F. (2 June 2009). "Rites and rituals: The sistrum, the menat-necklace and objects sacred to Hathor". *God's Wife, God's Servant: The God's Wife of Amun (ca. 740–525 BC)*. Abingdon: Routledge. p. 37. ISBN 9781134127931. Retrieved 21 April 2023. The distinction between the two types of sistrum, naos or loop, is strictly based on shape. [...] Setting the two types of sistrum apart is the shape and composition of the top part. The loop-sistrum typically comprised an arched piece of wire to which were attached three horizontal bars. [...] The naos-sistrum is so-called because its top part took the shape of a temple's sanctuary, or naos. [...] In Egyptian, three words were used to refer to the sistrum: sekhem, sesheshet, and ib. [...] A recent study by Reynders has shown that the Egyptian word sesheshet was always used in the caption texts accompanying scenes of playing the systrum, regardless of which type of sistrum was depicted in the scene. This observation led her to conclude that the word sesheshet referred to the noise made by the sistrum, while sekhem, when applied to the sistrum, referred specifically to the incarnation or manifestation of the goddess Hathor. Smithsonian National Museum of African Art.

Byghan, Yowann (12 March 2020). *Sacred and Mythological Animals: A Worldwide Taxonomy*. Jefferson, North Carolina: McFarland. p. 64. ISBN 9781476638874. Retrieved 21 April 2023. A sekhem (the Egyptian name) or σεῖστρον (the Greek name), now called a sistrum in West Africa, was a percussion instrument with a chiming or rattling sound [...].

Hart (2005), p. 65.

Duchesne-Guillemin, Marcelle (February 1981). "Music in Ancient Mesopotamia and Egypt" (PDF). *World Archaeology*. 12 (3): 289. doi:10.1080/00438243.1981.9979803. JSTOR 124240.

de Garis Davies, N. (April 1920). "An Alabaster Sistrum Dedicated by King Teta". *The Journal of Egyptian Archaeology*. 6 (2): 70–72. doi:10.2307/3853608. JSTOR 3853608.

Plutarch (1936), cap. 63.

Merchant (1992), p. 115.

Hart (2005), p. 47.

Borroff (1971), p. 9.

The Instruction of Amenemope in Lichtheim (2006), p. 149.

Borowka, Dawid (2020). "The Sistrum and its Mistress. Some thoughts about the usage of sistrum on Crete and its Hathoric associations". *Fontes Archaeological Posnanienses*. 56: 37–53 – via Academia.edu.

Philip P. Betancourt, Costis Davaras, and Eleni Stravopodi, "Excavations in the Hagios Charlambos Cave: A Preliminary Report", *Hesperia* 77 (2008): 539–605.

Curl, James Stevens (7 March 2023). "A Marian Odyssey". *Anglicanism.org*. Retrieved 6 April 2023.

Musée virtuel Canada museevirtuel.ca/edu Calabash Sistra, Gabon

Cited literature

Hart, George (2005). *The Routledge Dictionary of Egyptian Gods and Goddesses* (2nd ed.). Milton Park, UK: Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-34495-1.

Merchant, Carolyn (1992). *Radical Ecology: The Search for a Livable World*. Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-90650-0.

Plutarch (1936). *Isis and Osiris*. Loeb Classical Library. Vol. V.

Borroff, Edith (1971). *Music in Europe and the United States: A History*. Prentice-Hall. ISBN 9780136080831.

Lichtheim, Miriam (2006) [1976]. *The New Kingdom. Ancient Egyptian Literature*. Vol. 2. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press. ISBN 978-0-520-24843-4.

External links

Look up sistrum in Wiktionary, the free dictionary.

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Sistra.

Sistrum (Smith's Dictionary, 1875)

"Sistrum". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (11th ed.). 1911.

vte

Shaken idiophones

vte

Greek musical instruments

Authority control databases [Edit this at Wikidata](#)

Categories: [Shaken idiophones or rattles](#)[Egyptian artefact types](#)[Arabic musical instruments](#)[Ethiopian musical instruments](#)[Ancient Egyptian musical instruments](#)[Ancient Greek musical instruments](#)[Sacred musical instruments](#)[Hathor](#)[Bastet](#)

This page was last edited on 18 November 2025, at 06:59 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Spirit Science old forums \(archived\)](#)

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Short videos](#)

[Images](#)

[Videos](#)

[Forums](#)

[Shopping](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[Videos](#)

["Spirit Science: YouTube's Biggest Cult" \(by The Esoteric ...](#)

[Reddit · The Esoteric Archive](#)

[Aug 18, 2025](#)

[Reddit · The Esoteric Archive](#)

[36:35](#)

[Spirit Science, a YouTube channel with a cult-like following, promotes conspiracy theories, spiritual beliefs, and questionable practices like drug use and hospital infiltration.](#)

[Restoring the Spirit Science Sacred Timeline](#)

[YouTube · Spirit Science](#)

[Dec 19, 2023](#)

[YouTube · Spirit Science](#)

[6:24](#)

[Spirit Science is returning to its roots with a restored timeline, starting with a new](#)

episode 13 and a planned season 2.
Spirit Science 5 ~ The Keys of our Past
YouTube · Spirit Science
Dec 30, 2011
YouTube · Spirit Science

11:05
The Sphinx is the largest sculpture on the planet. We know it was not done by hairy barbarians but by a very sophisticated culture.
What is your opinion on "Spirit Science?" : r/skeptic
Reddit · Spirit Science
Jan 18, 2013
Reddit · Spirit Science

10:15
We are not only connected in the physical realm but in a mental and spiritual way.
Feedback
View all
Anyone know anything about Spirit Science?...

Facebook · Ascending Together
3 comments · 6 years ago
Science & Spirit Meet is designed to create an open forum for individuals who are interested in all forms of alternative thought including: ...
What do you think about Spirit Science? - Facebook
Mar 17, 2021
Spiritual Science So many times on this path of LOGOS has it ...
Jul 23, 2017
More results from www.facebook.com
Missing: old | Show results with: old
Spirit Science

the DMT-Nexus
<https://forum.dmt-nexus.me> › threads › spirit-science.3...
Jan 26, 2013 — Members of the previous forum can retrieve their temporary of explaining sacred geometry and other spiritual concepts clearly and pointedly.
Spirit Science - Archive Today
[archive.ph](https://d5jczdm57yz49r.archive.ph)
<https://d5jczdm57yz49r.archive.ph>
Nov 7, 2025 — Before you lies the entire collection of the Human History story which was previously spread across 5 episodes of spirit science!
1. The Present Position of Spiritual Science

Rudolf Steiner Archive
<https://rsarchive.org> › Lectures › EarthDeath

The Present Position of Spiritual Science. I need not tell you what pleasure it gives me to be with you again at this difficult time so full of trials.

Documents – Spirit Science

Alfa Vedic

<https://community.alfavedic.com> › groups › documents

Spirit Science Public Supporter. All things related to the aether, metaphysics and the science of the realm! Discussions Documents Members Photos Albums ...

Consciousness Perspectives Forum Past Events Archive

Scientific and Medical Network

<https://scientificandmedical.net> › past-events › archive

Past Events Archive: 2003-2020 ; London Group Meetings 2020 · on 9th November 2020 7:30 pm; Prof. Ravi Ravindra – Yoga and the Future Science of Consciousness

** ...

Missing: old | Show results with: old

The Origins of Spirit Science

YouTube · Spirit Science

90.6K+ views · 13 years ago

9:46

I first began exploring spirituality and spiritual thought about 2 weeks before Christmas in 2010.

Missing: old (archived)

Images

Restoring the Spirit Science Sacred Timeline

Restoring the Spirit Science Sacred Timeline

YouTube

Spirit Science: YouTube's Biggest Cult" (by The Esoteric ...

Spirit Science: YouTube's Biggest Cult" (by The Esoteric ...

Reddit

I'm surprised Spirit Science doesn't get more coverage : r/cults

I'm surprised Spirit Science doesn't get more coverage : r/cults

Reddit

Show more images

People also search for

Spirit science videos youtube

Spirit science 2

Science of spirit

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[HiveMind Archives](#)

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Images](#)

[Videos](#)

[Short videos](#)

[Shopping](#)

[News](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[HIVEMIND ARCHIVES](#)

[YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES](#)

2.8K+ followers

HiveMind Archives from www.youtube.com

Hivemind Archive (Interviews and Videos 2017- Sept 2018). HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

UNDER THE INFLUENCES Under the Influences w/ Sarob (Hivemind Interview)

477K ...

[Videos](#)

We are migrating to a shiny new channel

[YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES](#)

Sep 22, 2018

[YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES](#)

5:20

6 key moments in this video

From
01:25
What kind of content will we be putting out on the new channel?

From
01:41
Favorite music videos

From
02:30
New Cold Turkey video

From
04:13
New URL

From
04:49
Conclusion

From
05:01
Outro
ARCHIVES - HIVEMIND_ (OFFICIAL MUSIC VIDEO)
YouTube · ARCHIVES
Mar 6, 2025
YouTube · ARCHIVES

3:10
New Chance the Rapper Songs & Mason Ramsey Conspiracy ...
YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES
Jul 24, 2018
YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

51:10
Hank & Tony's Time Warp Refrigerator Vlog / Live ...
YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES
Jul 26, 2018
YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

4:56
Feedback
View all
VLOGS

YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

2.8K+ followers

HIVEMIND ARCHIVES Playlist • 22 videos • 1,203 & Jacob Sigman in studio cooking.

Relief Show in Cincinnati

Archive | Hivemind - Beehiiv

Beehiiv

<https://hivemind-times.beehiiv.com> › archive

Hivemind Times Issue #8 · Oct 04, 2024. 30. Hivemind Times Issue #8 · Hivemind ·

Hivemind Times Issue #7 · Sep 27, 2024. 43. Hivemind Times Issue #7 · Hivemind.

Under the Influences w/ Sarob (Hivemind Interview)

YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

220+ views · 7 years ago

20:21

We sit down at Loose Films for an interview with Columbus rapper, singer, and songwriter Sarob. follow us at @Hivemindtv. HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

Hive Mind Live At Aisle 5 Atlanta, Georgia 2024-07-05

Internet Archive

<https://archive.org> › details › hive2024-07-05

Jul 6, 2024 — Hive Mind : Free Download, Borrow, and Streaming : Internet Archive to 500,000+ books. DOWNLOAD OPTIONS download 9 files FLAC

Hivemind Archive : r/HivemindTV

Reddit · r/HivemindTV

2 comments · 5 months ago

That channel was originally just called hivemind they renamed it to hivemind archives subreddit for the Detroit-based YouTube channel HIVEMIND.

updated hivemind livestream archive!!

12 posts

Feb 7, 2024

Hivemind Clips Search Engine

30 posts

Jan 20, 2024

More results from www.reddit.com

POTPOURRI w/ BOBBY CALDWELL (HIVEMIND)

YouTube · HIVEMIND ARCHIVES

8.2K+ views · 7 years ago

6:38

We bounce some nonsense off R&B legend Bobby Caldwell (AKA "Party in the Lobby")

Caldwell). We ask if he'd rather be a dog or a cat, ...
Hivemind Archives - Page 15 of 16

Room Escape Artist

<http://roomescapeartist.com> › Reviews

Bewilderingly – Escape the Grid [Hivemind Review] · Lost Escape – The House of Wizard [Hivemind Review] · Adventure Lab – Dr. · Exit Productions – Jury Duty [...

People also ask

Who is hivemind?

What is the hivemind show?

Who are the hosts of Hivemind YouTube channel?

Feedback

Images

We are migrating to a shiny new channel

We are migrating to a shiny new channel

YouTube

HIVEMIND ARCHIVES - YouTube

HIVEMIND ARCHIVES - YouTube

YouTube

Belfast metalcore quartet ARCHIVES drop new single 'Hivemind ...

Belfast metalcore quartet ARCHIVES drop new single 'Hivemind ...

Hard Rock Hell Radio

Show more images

People also search for

Youtube hivemind archives

HIVEMIND YouTube wiki

The Hive mind podcast

Hivemind TV

HIVEMIND Live

Hivemind clips

HIVEMIND show

Hive mind youtube

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Occultfiles.net \(now defunct, mirrored via onion links\)](#)

AI Mode

All

Images

Videos

Shopping

Short videos

Forums

More

Tools

AI Overview

Occultfiles.net was a website that hosted a variety of occult, esoteric, and paranormal information and texts. The site is now defunct, but its content has reportedly been mirrored and made available via onion links on the dark web.

Accessing dark web sites (those ending in .onion) requires specific software, such as the Tor Browser, which helps mask online traffic and provides anonymity [0.10].

It is important to be aware that while the Tor network itself is legal in many places and used for legitimate purposes like secure communication and bypassing censorship, the dark web also hosts illicit content. When using the dark web, exercising caution is advised.

[Is the Tor Browser Illegal? | All About Cookies - AllAboutCookies.org](#)

Jun 24, 2025 — The Tor project, commonly called “The Onion Router,” is a privacy tool that helps keep your online activity anonymous ...

[All About Cookies](#)

[Everything You Should Know About the Dark Web | tulane](#)

Using a special browser known as The Onion Router (Tor), users can explore these hidden sites and engage in both legal and illicit...

[Tulane School Of Professional Advancement](#)

[What is the Tor browser and is it safe? - Kaspersky](#)

Oct 15, 2023 — What is a Tor browser? Tor (an acronym for The Onion Router) is

essentially a network that masks online traffic. Tor b...

Kaspersky

Show more

List of Tor onion services

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › List_of_Tor_onion_se...](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_Tor_onion_services)

This is a categorized list of notable onion services (formerly, hidden services) [1]

accessible through the Tor anonymity network. Defunct services

Dark web websites: 10 Onion sites to explore

Norton

[https://us.norton.com › Blog Home › Digital Life](https://us.norton.com/Blog/Home/Digital-Life)

Aug 12, 2025 — Onion sites, or dark web websites, are sites on the dark web that can typically only be accessed using special software like the Tor browser.

Dark Web Websites: The Best Onion and Tor Links 2025

Avast

[https://www.avast.com › ... › Privacy › Dark Web](https://www.avast.com/privacy/dark-web)

Oct 28, 2022 — Check out our list of the best dark web links and how to navigate onion and Tor sites safely. Then get a VPN to help protect your privacy on dark web websites.

Dark Web Links: The best .onion and Tor sites in 2025

ExpressVPN

[https://www.expressvpn.com › Blog › Featured](https://www.expressvpn.com/blog/featured)

Looking to explore the top dark web links? There's so much to see, where do you start? ExpressVPN lists the must-see .onion sites for 2025.

Encyclopedia of Weird Detectives: Supernatural and ...

dokumen.pub

[https://dokumen.pub › encyclopedia-of-weird-detective...](https://dokumen.pub/encyclopedia-of-weird-detective-hits-9781644850000.html)

This book covers the history of the weird detective in literature, film, television, radio, pulps, comic books and video games.

20 Best Dark Web Sites – Tried & Tested Onion Links (2025)

CyberGhost VPN

[https://www.cyberghostvpn.com › what-are-onion-sites](https://www.cyberghostvpn.com/what-are-onion-sites)

Wondering what onion sites are? Explore the hidden world of dark web websites with our list of .onion links. Learn how to stay safe while using Tor.

Top Dark Web Forums With .onion Links to Explore in 2025

Medium · adityaax

1 like · 5 months ago

This is the official forum of The Pirate Bay, mirroring its surface web version. Here you'll find discussions on torrents, P2P technologies, ...

People also ask

Is the onion browser illegal?

What is the name of the dark web browser?

What are onion websites?

Does the CIA have a website on the dark web?

Feedback

CROSSOVER - Philip José Farmer

[pjfarmer.com](https://www.pjfarmer.com)

<https://www.pjfarmer.com> › chron › chron10-revised

Adrian Fillmore takes a dizzying trip through consecutive alternate dimensions. He starts out in the Wold Newton Universe and visits many others, including the ...

Geist The Sin-Eaters Second Edition Final Download | PDF

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com> › document › Geist-the-Sin-Eat...

This book uses the supernatural for settings, characters and themes. All mystical and supernatural elements are fiction and intended for entertainment purposes ...

5.0(4)

Deep web links about paranormal, aliens, ufos, Area 51, ...

Reddit · r/onions

20+ comments · 8 years ago

I'm looking for links that lead to anything about the paranormal, aliens, MIB, Area 51, illuminate anything of the sort. Upvote

People also search for

Onion Search Engine

Ahmia

Tor

Mobile app

DuckDuckGo

Manga Dogs - manga reader

Feedback

Www dark web com online

Dark web search engine

Torch onion link Reddit

Candle onion link

Dark web search engine links 2025

Onion services

Onion links search

Onion search engine free

1

2

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms

AI overview is readySkip to main contentAccessibility help

Accessibility feedback

Seasonal Holidays 2025

Shamhurash

AI Mode

All

Images

Videos

Shopping

Short videos

News

More

Tools

Including results for Shamhurish

Search only for Shamhurash

Shamhurish - Jinn Wikia - Fandom

Jinn Wikia

<https://jinn.fandom.com/wiki/Shamhurish>

He is known as Melagoos "Shamhorash" which means the usher, the one who stands on the doors of the fifth palace for Satan and one of the servants of Prince ...

Shamhurash from jinn.fandom.com

King of the Jinn - by Erik Davis

Burning Shore | Erik Davis

<https://www.burningshore.com/king-of-the-jinn>

Sep 1, 2023 — "Shamhurish," a jinn king associated with purple, Thursday, Jupiter, and tin—common esoteric correspondences to the ruler of the gods.

Shamhurash from www.burningshore.com

People also ask

What does Shamhurish mean?

Who is the king of jinns in Morocco?

Who is Shamharush?

Who are the seven jinn kings?

Feedback

"The jinn of Thursday is a king named 'Shamhurash ...

Facebook · kirjandusõhtu "Viimane neljapäev"

3 years ago

No less funny is the genie "Shamhurash," the famous jinn judge who judges and rules in the world of jinn. The book was written and prepared in ...

Shamhurash from www.facebook.com

Shamhurish - The Demonic Paradise Wiki - Fandom

The Demonic Paradise Wiki

<https://the-demonic-paradise.fandom.com> › wiki › Sha...

Shamhurish was the ruler of Jupiter, the day Thursday, the color purple, the metal tin and was monitored by the angel Tzedeqel. Unlike the other jinn, ...

Devils and Demons of the Arabic Book of Wonders

bibliotecanatalie.com

<https://bibliotecanatalie.com> › home › devils-and-demo...

Oct 30, 2024 — Shamhurish is one of the eldest kings of the jinn and governs matters of law, justice, abundance, and children. This jinn king is a judge and ...

Chemharouch

OCCULT WORLD

<https://occult-world.com> › chemharouch

Oct 13, 2017 — ALSO KNOWN AS: Shamharush; Chemharouch is King of Morocco's Djinn. Sidi Chemharouch is also venerated as a saint in Marrakesh and elsewhere in ...

Shamhurish | PDF | Esotericism | Supernatural

Scribd

<https://www.scribd.com> › document › Shamhurish

Shamhurish, the Jinn King associated with Jupiter and Thursday, embodies justice, benevolence, and cosmic abundance in Arabic magical traditions.

Images

SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) • Instagram photos and videos

SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) • Instagram photos and videos

Instagram

Shamhurish | Jinn Wikia | Fandom

Shamhurish | Jinn Wikia | Fandom

Jinn Wikia - Fandom

Shamhurish | Jinn Wikia | Fandom

Shamhurish | Jinn Wikia | Fandom

Jinn Wikia - Fandom

Shamhurish: The Powerful Jinn That Promotes Justice & Kindness

Shamhurish: The Powerful Jinn That Promotes Justice & Kindness

Parhlo

Muslim Angel Shamhurash. Folio 83r from Kitāb-i Mū'nis al ...

Muslim Angel Shamhurash. Folio 83r from Kitāb-i Mū'nis al ...

warfare.x10host.com

SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) • Threads, Say more

SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) • Threads, Say more

Threads

Show more images

Demons, Djinn, and Devils of the Medieval Islamic World

Medievalists.net

<https://www.medievalists.net> › 2020/10 › demons-djinn...

Oct 31, 2020 — The djinn king of Thursday is called Shamhurash. Some sources refer to him as Abu al-Walad, meaning “the father of the child.” He is ...

Shamhurash from www.medievalists.net

SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) • Instagram photos and ...

Instagram · shamhurash

60+ followers

66 Followers, 41 Following, 51 Posts - SHAMHURASH (@shamhurash) on Instagram:

"{ وَمَنْ يَتَوَكَّلْ عَلَى اللَّهِ فَهُوَ حَسْبُهُ } Quran | Hadees | Salaf | Athar Quotes "

Shamhurash from www.instagram.com

People also search for

Chamharouch site

Barqan jinn

Aynah Jinn

Samhuras

Sidi Chamharouch ritual Video

Zawba ah

72 Jinn names

List of jinn

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

[Next](#)

Results are personalized

-

[Try without personalization](#)

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- [Update location](#)

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

[Wikipedia](#)The Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

[Lists of legendary creatures](#)

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[View source](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

Page semi-protected

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The following is a list of lists of legendary creatures, beings and entities from the folklore record. Entries consist of legendary and unique creatures, not of particularly unique individuals of a commonly known species.

[Alphabetical lists](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(A\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(B\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(C\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(D\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(E\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(F\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(G\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(H\)](#)

List of legendary creatures (I)
List of legendary creatures (J)
List of legendary creatures (K)
List of legendary creatures (L)
List of legendary creatures (M)
List of legendary creatures (N)
List of legendary creatures (O)
List of legendary creatures (P)
List of legendary creatures (Q)
List of legendary creatures (R)
List of legendary creatures (S)
List of legendary creatures (T)
List of legendary creatures (U)
List of legendary creatures (V)
List of legendary creatures (W)
List of legendary creatures (X)
List of legendary creatures (Y)
List of legendary creatures (Z)
Specific area-related lists
Category:Folklore by country
Category:Folklore by region
Portal:Religion
Category: Supernatural
Legendary creatures of the Argentine Northwest region
List of African mythological figures
List of creatures in Brazilian folklore
List of mythical creatures in Egyptian mythology
List of Chilote mythological creatures
List of creatures in Meitei folklore
List of Greek mythological creatures
Mythology of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas
List of legendary creatures from China
List of legendary creatures from France
List of legendary creatures from Japan
List of legendary creatures in Hindu mythology
List of named animals and plants in Germanic heroic legend
List of ghosts- Asian folklore
List of ghosts in Thai culture
List of Persian mythology
European folklore
Folklore of the Dominican Republic
Folklore of India
Folklore of Indonesia
List of Italian folklore
Folklore of Malaysia

Folklore of the Maldives
List of Nordic folklore
Punjabi folklore
Romani folklore
Folklore of Puerto Rico
Jewish folklore
Qatari folklore
List of Romanian folklore
List of Turkish folklore
Folklore of the United States
List of Philippine mythological creatures
List of spiritual entities in Islam
Folklore of the Low Countries
Mythical creatures in Burmese folklore
Supernatural beings in Slavic religion
Creature type-based lists
Main article: List of legendary creatures by type
See also

Wikimedia Commons has media related to legendary creatures.

Bestiary

Lists of fictional species

List of urban legends

vte

Lists of fictional life forms

vte

Urban legends

Disambiguation icon

This article includes a fiction-related list of lists.

Categories: Lists of fiction listsLists of legendary creaturesLists of fictional characters by type

This page was last edited on 5 November 2025, at 15:59 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

List of legendary creatures by type

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[View source](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

[Page semi-protected](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This list of legendary creatures from mythology, folklore and fairy tales is sorted by their classification or affiliation. Creatures from modern fantasy fiction and role-playing games are not included.

This is a dynamic list and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness. You can help by editing the page to add missing items, with references to reliable sources.

Animals, creatures associated with

Arthropods

See also: [Category:Mythological arthropods](#)

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a greenish-red fiery light reminiscent of fireflies

Karkinos (Greek) – Cancer the crab

Gold-digging ant (Greek) – Reported by Herodotus to live in either Ethiopia or the Indian subcontinent

Khepri (Ancient Egyptian) – Beetle who pushes the sun

Mothman (American cryptid) – Man with moth wings and features

Myrmecoleon (Christian) – Ant-lion

Myrmidons (Greek) – Warriors created from ants by Zeus

Pabilsag (Babylonian) – Sagittarius-like creature with scorpion tail

Scorpion man (Babylonian) – Protector of travellers

Selket (Ancient Egyptian) – Scorpion death/healing goddess

Zaratan (Arabic) – Giant crab mistaken for an island

Spiders

See also: [Category:Mythological spiders](#)

Aiapæc (Moche) – Creator god, often seen as a spider with an anthropomorphic face and jaguar fangs

Anansi (West African) – Trickster spider

Arachne (Greek) – Weaver cursed into a spider

Areop-Enap (Nauru) – Creator god, made the earth and sky from a giant clam shell

Chaffee Spider (American cryptid) – Large cave spider kept as pest control and guard

dogs by early settlers in Chaffee, Colorado, before mysteriously vanishing off the face of the earth

Christmas Spider (Ukrainian) – Spider whose webs became the first tinsel on a tree

Djieien (Seneca) – Man-sized spider who survived most attacks because its heart was buried underground.

Iktomi (Lakota) – Trickster spider. Also known in parts of the Rockies

Jorōgumo (Japanese) – Ghost woman who shapeshifts into a spider

Spider_Grandmother (Native American) – Important figure across many North West Native American Cultures

Tsuchigumo (Japanese) – Shapeshifting giant spider

Birds

See also: Category:Legendary birds

Ababil (Islamic) – A miraculous bird

Adarna (Philippine) – Colorful bird with healing powers, puts people to sleep, and turns people into stone

Avalerion (English) – Eagle-like bird; only a single pair was said to live at any time

Alicanto (Chilean) – Bird with luminescent feathers which feeds on gold or silver [1]

Anqa (Arabian) – Large, mysterious, or fabulous female bird

Anzû (Mesopotamian) – Massive bird who can breathe fire and water

Bare-fronted Hoodwink (Cryptid) – Bird with the ability to be "almost seen", created to satirize birdwatchers

Caladrius (Roman) – White bird with healing powers

Chalkydri (Jewish) – Heavenly creatures of the sun

Chamrosh (Persian mythology) – Creature with the body of a dog, and the head and wings of a bird

Cinnamon bird (Greek) – Arabian bird in Greek mythology that builds nests out of cinnamon

Devil Bird (Sri Lankan) – Shrieking bird who predicts death

Gagana (Russian) – Miraculous bird with an iron beak and copper claws

Gandabherunda (Hindu) – Two-headed magical bird

Garuda (Hindu) – Known as the primordial bird and the progenitor of all birds; vehicle of Lord Vishnu

Hakawai (Māori) – Bird that was sometimes heard but not usually seen

Hudhud (Islamic) – Messenger to prophets

Jingwei (Chinese) – A bird who is determined to fill up the sea

Luan (Chinese) – A bird which carries a shield and tramples on snakes while wearing one on its breast

Minokawa (Philippine) – Giant, dragon-like bird

Nine-headed Bird (Chinese) – A totem creature, predecessor to the Fenghuang

Oozlum bird (English) – A satirical creature that flies in ever-decreasing circles until it disappears into its own backside

Pamola (Abenaki) – A bird/moose spirit who causes cold weather

Peng (Chinese) – An enormous bird transformed from a giant fish which flies over the great oceans

Phoenix (Greek) –

Bennu (Egyptian) – self-creating bird deity
 Chol (Biblical) – regenerative bird
 Firebird (Slavic) – legendary bird with glowing eyes and feathers, brings misfortune if captured.
 Fenghuang (Chinese) – a phoenix who reigns over all other birds
 Huma bird (Persian) – a bird that flies too high to be seen and never lands
 Konrul and Toghrul (Turkic)
 Paskunji (Georgian/ Caucasus) phoenix like underworld dwelling bird. Kills the snakes on the path to the afterlife & aid heroes on quests.
 Vermilion Bird (Chinese)
 Piasa (Native American) – Based on monster depicted on Illinois rock painting near the Mississippi River
 Qingniao (Chinese) – Blue or green messenger birds of the Queen Mother of the West
 Ra (Ancient Egyptian) – Sun deity often depicted with falcon features
 Rain Bird (Native American) – Bird who brought rain
 Raróg (Slavic) – Fiery demon falcon
 Roc (Arabian) – Enormous legendary bird of prey
 Shangyang (Chinese) – Rainbird
 Shedû (Mesopotamian) – Male counterpart to Lamassu
 Simurgh (Persian) – Phoenix-like bird of enormous size and great longevity and wisdom
 Stymphalian birds (Greek) – Man-eating birds
 Thoth (Ancient Egyptian) – Ibis-headed god of the moon, wisdom, and art
 Three-legged bird (various cultures)
 Thunderbird (Native American) – Legendary bird spirit that brings storms, found primarily among the cultures of the Pacific Northwest, but also the American Southwest, Great Lakes, and Great Plains
 Turul (Hungarian) – Mythological bird of prey
 Veðrfölnir (Norse) – Hawk that sits atop an eagle that rests atop the world tree, Yggdrasil
 Vucub Caquix (Mayan) – Bird demon
 Wampus Bird (Native American) – Giant heron with shell armor instead of feathers
 Zhenniao (Chinese) – Poisonous bird
 Avian Humanoids
 Main article: List of avian humanoids
 See also: Category:Avian humanoids
 Alkonost (Slavic) – Female with body of a bird
 Gamayun (Slavic) – Prophetic bird with woman's head
 Gummyōchō (Yōkai) – Twin-headed human-bird
 Harpy (Greek) – Ugly winged bird woman, steals food
 Aello – Name meaning "storm"
 Ocypete – Name meaning "swift wing"
 Celaeno – Name meaning "the dark one"
 Podarge – Name meaning "fleet-footed"
 Horus (Ancient Egyptian) – Tutelary deity and god of the sky and kingship
 Inmyeonjo (Korean) – Bird with a human face
 Itsumade (Japanese) – Monstrous bird with a human face

Kalavinka (Buddhist) – Fantastical immortal creature with a human head and a bird's torso and long flowing tail

Karura (Japanese) – Divine creature with human torso and bird-like head

Kinnara (Buddhist) – Half-bird musicians

Lamassu (Mesopotamian) – Goddess with a human head, the body of a bull or a lion, and bird wings

Siren (Greek) – Bird-women known for their compelling singing

Achelous – Name meaning "she who drives away pain", surname for the daughters of Achelous

Aglaonoe – Daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore

Agalaope – Name meaning "with lambent voice", daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore

Leucosia – Name meaning "white", daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Terpsichore

Ligeia – Name meaning "clear-toned", daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Terpsichore

Parthenope – Name meaning "maiden-voiced", Daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore

Pisinoe – Daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Sterope

Thelxinoë – Name meaning "mind charming"

Swan maiden (Multi-cultural) – Shapeshifts from human to swan

Tengu (Japanese) – Has human and bird characteristics, name means "dog"

Chickens

See also: Category:Mythological galliforms

Alectryon (Greek) – Rooster charged with announcing the arrival of Helios

Basan (Japanese) – Fire-breathing chicken

Cockatrice – Chicken-headed dragon or serpent, visually similar to the Basilisk

Gallic rooster – Symbolic rooster used as an allegory for France

Gullinkambi – Rooster who lives in Valhalla in Norse mythology

Rooster of Barcelos – A mythological rooster from Portugal

Sarimanok (Philippine) – Legendary chicken of the Maranao people who originate from Mindanao

Víðópnir – Rooster that sits atop Yggdrasil in Norse mythology

Corvids

Main article: Cultural depictions of ravens

See also: Category:Mythological corvids

Badb (Irish) – War goddess who takes the form of a crow

Corone (Greek) – Woman turned into a crow to flee Poseidon

Huginn and Muninn (Norse) – Two ravens that serve as messengers

Kutkh (Indigenous Russian) – Raven spirit involved in the creation myth

Nachtkrapp (German) – Raven who kidnaps children out at night

Rainbow crow (Lenape (supposed)) – Crow who brought fire to earth

Raum (Demonology) – Demon crow and a great earl of Hell

Three-legged crow (East Asian) – Crow with three legs representing the sun

Yatagarasu (Shinto) – Three-legged crow

Tulugaak (Inuit) – Raven god and creator of light

Waang (Australian Aboriginal) – Trickster crow and culture hero

Eagles

See also: Category:Mythological birds of prey

Aethon (Greek) – Eagle tormentor of Prometheus

Griffin (Greek) – Guards treasure and priceless possessions

Hippogriff (Italian) – Winged horse with the head and upper body of an eagle

Huracán (Mayan) – Type of thunderbird that lives beneath the Gulf of Mexico.

Etymological origin of "hurricane"

Hræsvelgr (Norse) – Jötunn who takes the form of an eagle

Poukai (Māori) – Monstrous predatory bird, likely based on an extinct species

Shahbaz (Persian) – Eagle god who helped the Iranian peoples and guided the

Faravahar to the Iranian lands

Triple-headed eagle (multi-cultural) –

Wuchowsen - (Abenaki) One of the four wind spirits in Abenaki lore. Depicted as a giant eagle who lives atop a mountain.

Ziz (Jewish) – Giant griffin

Zu (Mesopotamian) – Divine monster depicted as a lion-headed eagle

Owls

See also: Category:Owls in culture

Chickcharney (Bahamas) – Magical owl with powers over fate, sometimes encountered by travellers in pine forests.

Nyctimene (Roman) – Princess transformed into an owl by Minerva.

Owlman (English) – Owl-like humanoid compared to America's Mothman

Sirin (Slavic) – Birds with women's heads who lured men to their deaths

Strix (Greek) – Owl that ate human flesh

Fish

See also: Category: Legendary fish

Fish People

Mermaid / Merman – half-human, half-fish (worldwide)

Water spirit – (worldwide)

Undine – water elementals in the alchemical writings of Paracelsus

Abaia

Gurangatch

Hippocamp

Ika-Roa

Il Belliegħa - (Malta) Eel like monster with a frog tongue and a hand on the tip of its tail that eats children who get too close to open wells.

Isonade

Namazū

Ningyo

Kun

Salmon of Wisdom

Shachihoko (Japanese) – a creature with the head of a tiger and the body of a carp

Mug-wamp - Canadian giant sturgeon monster said to inhabit Lake Temiskaming in Ontario. Name is of Native origin.

Mammals

Aquatic and marine-based

Aspidochelone (Greek) – Island sized whale mentioned in bestiaries

Bahamut (Arabic) – Whale monster whose body supports the earth. Word seems far more ancient than Islam and may have the same origin as the word Behemoth in modern Judeo-Christian lore

Bake-kujira (Japanese) – Ghost whale

Cetus (Greek) – A monster with the head of a boar or a greyhound, the body of a whale or dolphin, and a divided, fan-like tail

Devil Whale (English) – Whale capable of swallowing ships

Dobhar-chú (Scottish) – King otter

Encantado (Brazilian) – Shapeshifting trickster dolphins

Glashtyn (Celtic) – Horse goblin from the sea

Gveleshapi (Georgian) - Snake-whale monster associated with lakes, rivers and springs. Said to be causes of floods and other water related disasters

Lavellan (Scottish) – Water shrew or water vole with poisonous abilities, said to be able to injure cattle over a hundred feet away

Makara (Hindu mythology) – Half terrestrial animal in the frontal part (stag, deer, or elephant) and half aquatic animal in the hind part (usually of a fish, a seal, or a snake, though sometimes a peacock or even a floral tail is depicted)

Sea goat (Greek) – Half goat, half fish

Selkie (Scottish) – Shapeshifting seal people

Water bull (Scottish) – Nocturnal amphibious bull

Water Horse – General name for mythical water dwelling horses of many cultures

Ceffyl Dŵr (Welsh) – Water horse

Each-uisge (Scottish) – Malevolent shapeshifting oceanic water horse

Enbarr (Irish) – Manann's horse, capable of traversing land and sea

Hippocampus (Greek) – Horse with a fish tail

Ichthyocentaurs (Greek) – Upper body of a man, the lower front of a horse, tail of a fish

Kelpie (Scottish) – Water horse

Morvarc'h (Breton) – Legendary horse that could gallop on the waves

Nixie (Germanic) – Shapeshifting water being, known for appearing as horses

Nuckelavee (Orkadian) – Skinless oceanic water horse with pestilent breath

Nuggle (Scottish) – Mischievous male water horse

Tangie (Scottish) – Shapeshifting sea water horse

Bats

See also: Category:Bats in religion

Balayang (Australian Aboriginal) – Bat-god and brother to Bunjil

Camazotz (Mayan) – Bat spirit and servant of the lords of the underworld

Leutogi (Polynesian) – Samoan princess rescued by bats

Minyades (Greek) – Three sisters who refused to take part in the worship of Dionysus, and turned into bats by Hermes

Tjinimin (Australian Aboriginal) – Ancestor of the Australian people

Vetala (Hindu) – Vampiric entity that takes over cadavers

Carnivorans

Bears

See also: Category:Mythological bears

Bjarndyrakongur (Icelandic) – King of bears. Stems from Polar Bear sightings in Iceland being extremely rare, but not unheard of. Has a shining horn on its head topped with a ball and red patches on cheeks

Bugbear (Celtic) – Child-eating hobgoblin

Callisto (Greek) – A nymph who was turned into a bear by Hera

Stiff-Legged Bear (Native American) – Gigantic, hairless bear monster in tribal folklore, predominantly Iroquoians and Algonquians, possibly inspired by mammoths

Canines

See also: Category:Mythological canines

Adlet (Inuit) – Tribe of hybrid dog people birthed from a woman who married her dog. Were banished for preying on humans.

Akhlut (Inuit) – Wolf-orca hybrid monster that hunts on both land and sea.

Amarok (Inuit) – Giant solitary wolf that hunts at night

Anubis (Egyptian) – Jackal-headed god associated with mummification and the afterlife

Aralez (Armenian) – Winged dogs that descend from heaven and resurrect fallen warriors by licking their wounds

Asena (Altai/Turkish) – She-wolf impregnated by mythical founder of a tribe called the Golturks. They came to Turkey from Altai in Siberia during the empire of Ghengis Khan

Axehandle hound (North American) – Axe-shaped dog that reputedly subsists on axe-handles left unattended

Black dog (British) – Also known as Barghest, Black Shuck, or Grim; associated with the Devil, Hellhound

Beast of Gévaudan (French) – Man-eating wolf, terrorized the province of Gévaudan

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a small, luminescent dog [2]

Cerberus (Greek, Roman) – Multi-headed dog, guards the gates of the Underworld, son/brother of Orthrus

Chupacabra (Latin American) – Alleged creature reputed to attack and drink the blood of livestock, occasionally described with bat-like features. Sometimes thought to resemble, or mistaken for a hairless coyote

Cu Sith or Cusith (Irish, Scottish, Hebridean) – A hellhound, a highland harbinger of death

Crocotta – Mythical dog-wolf that can imitate human voices, supposedly found in India or Ethiopia

Cynocephaly – Humanoids with the head of a dog or jackal

Dogs of Actaeon (Greek) – Hunting dogs that turned on Actaeon after he was turned into a deer

Failinis (Irish) – Legendary hound with a number of abilities

Fenrir (Norse) – Monstrous wolf destined to kill Odin

Gelert (Welsh) – Dog killed out of error by Welsh King, thinking it had murdered his infant child

Hellhound (Worldwide) – Supernatural dogs, bringers of death

Huodou (Chinese) – a large black dog that can emit flames from its mouth

Hvcko Capko (Seminole) – Also Long Ears, Stinky Wolf. A horse sized wolf with extra large, pointed ears, a horse's tail and reeks of rot and death. Prolonged exposure to its

stench causes deadly illness

Kludde (Belgium) – demon summoned from the ashes of witches taking the form of a black wolf with bat wings, a birds beak and bear claws. Has glowing eyes, shapeshifting abilities and great speed

Orthrus (Greek) – two headed dog, father/brother of Cerberus

Papa-mel or Papamel – Dog of the Amazonian Curupira

Penghou (Chinese) – tree spirit that appears like a black dog and tastes like dog-meat

Petitcrieu – Fairy dog in Tristan romance

Psoglav (Bosnia) – Humanoid monster with dog's head, horse's legs, one eye and iron teeth.

Salawa – the "Typhonian Animal," a slender, vaguely canine-animal that is the totemic animal of Set

Sigbin (Philippine) – is a creature in Philippine mythology

Shug Monkey – dog/monkey creature found in Cambridgeshire (Britain)

Tanuki (Japanese) – Japanese raccoon dog, legends claim is a shapeshifting trickster

Vǎrkolak, or "Vukodlak" (Slavic) – Undead vampire werewolf

Werewolf – human, shapeshifts to a wolf because of an affliction, lycanthrope (Worldwide)

Foxes

See also: Category:Mythological foxes

Aguara (Chané) – Trickster fox associate with the constellation Scorpius.

Amaterasu (Japanese) – Sun goddess who sometimes takes the form of a dragon-fox.

Tulikettu (Finnish) – Fox with flaming fur, whose skin is said to be a safer alternative for lighting than fire. Catching on in a hunt will guarantee riches. Gives name to the northern lights

Huli jing (Chinese) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Kitsune (Japanese) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Kumiho (Korean) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Sky Fox (mythology) (Chinese) – Celestial nine-tailed Fox Spirit that is 1,000 years old and has golden fur

Felines

See also: Category:Mythological felines

Bael (Demonology) – First king of Hell with three heads: a man, a toad, and a cat

Ball-tailed cat (North American) – a feline similar to a mountain lion, except with a long tail with a bulbous end used for striking its prey

Cactus cat (North American) – a feline of the American Southwest with hair-like thorns that intoxicates itself by the consumption of cactus water

Canaima (Mexico) – Term for a sort of were-jaguar. May be related to skinwalkers

Cat-sith (Celtic mythology) – Spectral cat that haunts the Scottish Highlands

Cath Palug (Welsh) – Monstrous cat said to have killed 180 warriors

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a cat with a luminescent chin [3]

Demon Cat (North American) – a ghost cat who is purported to haunt the government buildings of Washington, D.C.

Kaibyō (Japanese) – Various forms of cat Yōkai

Bakeneko (Japanese) – Two-tailed cat yōkai

Kasha (Japanese) – Corpse stealing yōkai, sometimes originating as a cat
Nekomata (Japanese) – Cat yōkai from both mountains and domestic areas
Nue (Japanese) – Hybrid of monkey, tiger, tanuki and snake. Considered a yokai
Panther (Greek) – Wildcat with multicolored hide. Attracts prey with sweet smelling breath and is often ridden by and associated with the god, Dionysus
Pard (Greek) – Early Greek understanding of a leopard. It was also surmised that cheetahs were a hybrid of a lion and a pard, hence calling those leopards instead of what we now call leopards
Phantom cat, Alien Big Cat (Modern, Worldwide) – Wildcat that seems to appear far beyond its native range by unknown circumstance
Blue Mountains panther (Australian) – Alleged unknown wildcats sighted in Australia
Glawackus (American) – Hybrid bear-panther-lion monster that sounds like a hyena and can erase the memory of those who look into its eyes
Tyger (English) – Heraldic being that looked like a cross between a lion, horse and wolf, said to be red and speckled
Underwater panther (Native American) – Shapeshifting being known by many names among tribes in Eastern US
Vapula (European, Christian, Demonology) – A demon with insight into mechanics and science which takes a winged lion form
Vassoko (Africa, Chad) – Cat the size of a horse with long fangs and burning eyes. Always accompanied by an entourage of butterflies
Wampus cat (American) – Cat with six legs and a long tail; originally a man who was transformed into the creature by a curse
White Tiger (Chinese) – a Guardian Of The West cardinal point
Winged cat – Archaeological designation for depictions of any mythological creature that can fit that description

Lions

See also: Category:Mythological lions

Arimanius (Greek) – Minor lion-headed Greek god
Ammit (Egyptian) – Goddess with the forequarters of a lion, the hindquarters of a hippopotamus, and the head of a crocodile
Barong (Balinese) – Benevolent king of spirits
Beast of the First Kingdom (Christian) – A beast like a lion with eagle's wings seen in the Book of Revelations
Brunswick Lion (German) – Loyal companion of Henry the Lion after the two slew a dragon together
Chimera (Greek)
Chinese guardian lions (Chinese) – Statues depicted in pairs believed to be protectors
Komainu (Shinto)
Shisa (Ryukyuan)
Sin-you (Japanese)
Xiezhi (Chinese)
Dawon (Tibetan) – Mount of the goddess Durga
Egyptian lion gods – Lions were a symbol of warfare and most all of these gods were warriors

Aker – Earth and underworld god
Àmi-Pe – A lion god
Apedemak – Depicted as a figure with a male human torso and a lion head
Bast – Lioness goddess of fertility and protection against disease.
Hert-ketit-s
Huntheth – A lioness goddess
Ipy (goddess) – Head and feet of a lion, body of a hippo, arms of a human
Maahes – Name means "he who is true beside her"
Matit – A funerary cat goddess who had a cult center at Thinis
Mehit – Depicted as a reclining lioness with three bent poles projecting from her back
Menhit
Pakhet
Repyt
Sekhmet – Warrior goddess as well as goddess of healing
Seret – A lioness goddess possibly originally from Libya
Shesmetet
Taweret – Depicted as a hippopotamus with lion paws and crocodile tail
Tefnut –
Tutu – Body of a striding, winged lion, the head of a human, other heads of hawks and crocodiles projecting from the body, and the tail of a serpent
Urit-en-kru – A lioness headed hippopotamus goddess
Griffin (Europe)
Lamassu (Mesopotamian)
Lampago (Heraldic) – Mythical beast in the form of a "man-tiger or man-lion"
Leo (Greek) –
Lion of Cithaeron (Greek)
Nemean lion (Greek)
Lion of Al-lât (Arabian) – Lion icon of Al-Lat
Manticore (Persian)
Manussiha (Burmese) – Statue with a human head and two lion hindquarters
Merlion (Singaporean) – Fish with a lion's head
Narasimha (Hindu) – Part-lion avatar of Vishnu
Nian (Chinese) – Flat-faced lion with the body of a dog and prominent incisors, warded away by New Year's celebrations
Nongshāba (Sanamahism) – Lion god who created the sun
Pixiu (Chinese) – Powerful, winged lions who protect Feng shui practitioners
Questing Beast (Arthurian) – Beast with the head and neck of a snake, the body of a leopard, the haunches of a lion, and the feet of a hart
Sea-lion (Heraldic) – A half-lion half-fish beast found in heraldry
Serpopard (Egyptian) – Lion/leopard body with a snake head.
Sharabha (Hindu) – Part lion, part bird-beast, with eight legs.
Simhamukha (Tibetan) – A wisdom dakini of the Dzogchen tradition with the head of a snow lion
Snow Lion (Tibetan) – Celestial animal of Tibet
Sphinx (Egyptian) –

Criosphinx (Egyptian) – Ram-headed sphinx
Gopaitioshah (Persian) – Winged bull or lion with human face
Hieracosphinx (Egyptian) – Has the head of a hawk and the body of a lion
Stratford Lyon
Tigris (Jewish) – Giant lion of the forest of Bei Ilai
Vaikuntha Chaturmurti (Hindu) – a four-headed aspect of the Hindu god Vishnu: a human head, a lion head, a boar head and a fierce head
Winged lion
Yali (Hindu) – Portrayed with the head and the body of a lion, the trunk and the tusks of an elephant, and sometimes bearing equine features
Yaghūth – A god of the era of the prophet Noah
Yaldabaoth (Gnostic) – Lion-headed serpent god.
Hyenas
Werehyena
Musteloids and non-hyena herpestoids
Azeban
Gef
Ichneumon
Kamaitachi
Kushtaka (Tlingit) – shapeshifting "land otter man"
Mujina
Ramidreju
Raijū
Procyonids
Azeban – trickster raccoon spirit in Abenaki mythology
Marsupials
See also: Category:Mythological marsupials
Drop bear
Bunyip (Australian Aboriginal)
Primates
See also: Category:Mythological monkeys
Agropelter – a beast that amuses itself by hurling twigs and tree branches at passersby (United States & Canada)
Bigfoot or Sasquatch – Cryptid, animal of the Northwest (North America)
Hibagon or Hinagon – ape-like, similar to Bigfoot, or the Yeti (Japan)
Jué yuán – blue-furred man-sized rhesus monkey that abducts human women (China & Japan)
Satori – mind-reading magical ape or monkey (Japan)
Shōjō – anthropomorphic spirit, depicted as furred, somewhat confounded with orangutan (Japan)
Shug Monkey – dog/monkey (Britain)
Sun Wukong (proper name) – powerful warrior-magician in the form of a monkey who hatched from a stone egg (China)
Vanara – humanoid apes or monkeys (India, Hindu)
Yeren – man-monkey, cryptid hominid, resides in remote mountainous (China)

Yeti – Abominable Snowman, ape-like cryptid similar to Bigfoot, that inhabits the Himalayas (Nepal, Tibet)

Yowie – hominid said to live in the Australian wilderness, a cryptid similar to the Himalayan Yeti (Australia)

Rabbits and hares

See also: Category:Mythological rabbits and hares

Al-Mi'raj – rabbit with unicorn horn (Arabia)

Jackalope – (North America)

Moon rabbit – a rabbit living on the moon (Chinese)

Skvader

Wisakedjak - (Native American) aka Whiskeyjack. One of several names for rabbit trickster spirit of the eastern woodlands and Great Plains

Wolpertinger

Rodents

See also: Category:Mythological rodents

Afanc

Lavellan (Scottish) – Water shrew or water vole with poisonous abilities, said to be able to injure cattle over a hundred feet away

Ratatoskr

Rat king; phenomenon in which a number of rats become intertwined at their tails (Germany, France)

Wolpertinger

Ungulates

Antelopes and deer

See also: Category:Mythological deer

Actaeon (Greek) – a hunter turned into a deer and torn apart by his dogs

Ceryneian Hind (Greek) – Artemis' large, sacred golden hind

Deer Woman (Native American) – female human above the waist, deer below. Male version is Elk Man.

Eikpyrnir (Norse mythology) – stag which stands upon Valhalla

Goldhorn (Slavic) – white golden-horned antelope

Jackalope (North American) – jackrabbit with antelope horns

Keresh (Jewish) – giant deer of the forest of Bei Ilai

Peryton (Argentina) – Stag that is part bird

Qilin (Chinese) – East Asian chimerical good-luck symbol

Tarand (European) also Parandrus. Antelope or deerlike creature said to be found in Ethiopia that can change the color of its fur at will to camouflage itself

White stag (worldwide) – magic white deer

Xeglun (Tungusic mythology) – celestial elk

Bovines

See also: Category:Mythological bovines

Auðumbla

Bai Ze

Kujata (Arabic) – Cosmic bull that bears the angel who holds the earth. Kujata, in turn, stands on Bahamhut.

Bicorn and Chichevache

Bonnacon

Hodag (American) – monster born of the cremated remains of an abused bull

Minotaur – monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man (Greek)

Nandi

Sarangay – a bull with a huge muscular body and a jewel attached to its ears (Philippines)

Shedu

Tē-gû – a giant buffalo living underground which causes earthquakes (Taiwan)

Ushi-oni – (Japan)

Camelids

Allocamelus – A donkey-headed camel.

Heavenly Llama[4]

Caprids

See also: Category:Mythological caprids

Amalthea

Aries

Barometz

Capricornus

Chimera

Dahu

Faun – a Roman version of satyr. It has a human head and torso and a goat waist and legs.

Goldhorn – also known as Zlatorog

Heiðrún – goat in Norse mythology, which produces mead for the einherjar

Khnum

Satyr – a goat legged human that is associated to the deity Dionysus. Known to be drunk partiers.

Sidehill gouger

Tanngrisnir and Tanngrjóstr – Thor's magical goats

Chrysomallos – a sheep with golden fleece from Greek mythology

Equines

Main articles: List of horses in mythology and folklore and List of winged horses

See also: Category:Horses in mythology

Anggitay – is a creature with the upper body of a female human and the lower body of a horse from waist down (Philippines)

Arion – Talking immortal horse (Greek)

Balius and Xanthus (Greek) – immortal offspring of harpies

Buraq – Al-Burāq, steed from the heavens that transported the prophets (Islam)

Centaur – head, arms, and torso of a human, the body and legs of a horse (Greek)

Cheval Gauvin – horse which tries to kill its rider (French/Swiss)

Cheval Mallet; horse that tempts and kidnaps weary travelers (French)

Chiron – centaur believed to be exceptional among his brethren (Greek)

Chollima – a winged horse too swift to be mounted by any mortal (Chinese)

Drapé - (France) Ghostly horse who spirits away children wandering at night to an

unknown location, never to be seen again.

Gytrash (English) – shapeshifting spirit usually taking the form of a horse, mule or other animal that appears to the lost and leads them to their destination

Haizum – horse of the archangel Gabriel (Islam)

Hippogriff – winged horse with the head and upper body of an eagle (French, English)

Ipotane – half-horse, half-humans, original centaurs (Greek)

Karkadann – monstrous, highly aggressive unicorn (India, Persia)

Kotobuki (Japanese) – Yokai with traits of all members of the Chinese zodiac

Longma – fabled winged horse with dragon scales (China)

Mankayia (Kiowa) – tornado spirit in the form of a horse

Onocentaur – part human, part donkey (Greek)

Pegasus – winged white stallion (Greek)

Pooka – spirits or fairies who lived near ancient stones; could be good or bad (Ireland)

Sleipnir – Odin's eight-legged horse, which he rode to Hel (Norse)

Simurgh – like the Hippogriff with the head of a human (Persian)

Sihuanaba – shapeshifting spirit that typically appears as a beautiful, long-haired woman when seen from behind, before revealing her face to be that of a horse

Tikbalang – creature with the body of a man and the head and hooves of a horse that lurks in the mountains and forests (Philippines)

Uchchaisravas – seven-headed flying white horse (Hindu)

Unicorn – horse-like creature with a single horn, often symbolizing purity (worldwide)

Winged unicorn

Water Horse – general name for mythical water dwelling horses of many cultures

Ceffyl Dŵr (Welsh) – water horse

Each-uisge (Scottish) – Malevolent shapeshifting oceanic water horse

Enbarr (Irish) – Manann's horse, capable of traversing land and sea

Hippocampus (Greek) – Horse with a fish tail

Ichthyocentaurs (Greek) – upper body of a man, the lower front of a horse, tail of a fish

Kelpie (Scottish) – water horse

Morvarc'h (Breton) – legendary horse that could gallop on the waves

Nixie (Germanic) – Shapeshifting water being known for appearing as a horse

Nuckelavee (Orkadian) – Skinless oceanic water horse with pestilent breath

Nuggle (Scottish) – Mischievous male water horse

Tangie (Scottish) – shapeshifting sea water horse

White horse

Pachyderms

Main article: List of elephants in mythology and religion

See also: Category:Mythological elephants

Abath

Baku

Behemoth

Quugaarpak - (Inuit) Explanation for Mammoths & other Ice Age remains washing out of riversides. Underworld monsters who dig their way up to the human world, but die upon breathing our air.

Taweret

Pigs and boars

See also: Category:Mythological pigs

Calydonian Boar

Erymanthian Boar

Zhu Bajie

Xenarthrans

Mapinguari

Molluscs

See also: Category:Mythological molluscs

Akkorokamui – octopus monster (Ainu, Japan)

Amikuk (Yup'ik) - Shapeshifting four armed 'octopus' that can swim through land as easily as water.

Carbuncle (Chilote) – one of its many descriptions is a luminescent bivalve[3][2]

Lou Carcolh – A giant, man-eating snail with fur and tentacles (France)

Kraken – squid monster (Worldwide)

Shen – A clam-dragon that creates mirages and fata morgana at sea (China)

Reptiles

Limbed

See also: Category:Legendary reptiles

Agoa (American) – turtle monster of West Virginian lore centered around the Monongahela River

Ammut – female demon, funerary deity and animal hybrid (Egypt)

Bakunawa – serpentine dragon in Philippines

Basilisk – king of serpents with the power to cause death with a single glance (Europe)

Black Tortoise – one of the four symbols of the Chinese constellations

Chalkydri

Chinese Dragon – serpentine creature with four legs

Cipactli – sea monster, part crocodile, fish and toad. Always hungry, thousands of mouths (Aztec)

Dragon – serpentine, reptilian traits (worldwide)

Dungavenhooter – a crocodilian creature with no mouth and huge nostrils who uses its tail to pound victims into a vapor, which it then inhales

Knucker – sea serpent-like dragon

Kurma

Loch Ness Monster – sea monster cryptid (Scotland)

Loveland frog – Humanoid cryptid (The United States (Ohio))

Luu – (Mongol) – serpentine water dragons capable of causing great floods if angered.

Makara

Mokele Mbembe

Mo'ō (Hawaiian) class of shapeshifting lizard monsters

Morgawr (Cornish) – crocodilian sea serpent that affects fishing

Mungoon-Gali – a giant goanna (Australia)

Peluda

Reptilian humanoids

Sewer alligator

Sobek
Taniwha
Whowie – a giant frog-headed goanna with six legs (Australia)
Wyvern
Zaratan
Serpents and worms
See also: List of dragons in mythology and folklore, Category: Legendary serpents, and
Serpents in the Bible
Alicante
Amphisbaena
Amphithere
Apep/Apophis
Azhi Dahaka
Basilisk
Bakonawa
Biscione
Cockatrice
Dragon
Drake
Echidna
Fáfnir
Feathered serpent
Garafena (Russian)
Gorgon
Hoop snake
Indus worm
Hydra
Jaculus/Jaculi
Jasconius
Jörmungandr — the Midgård serpent
Lamia
Lindworm
Madame White Snake
Meretseger
Mongolian Death Worm
Naga
Níðhöggr
Orm
Ouroboros
Python
Rainbow serpent
Sea serpent
Schießschlange
Tarasque
Tolba — the world turtle that supports North America upon its back

Tsuchinoko

Typhon

Ur

Wyvern

Yamata no Orochi

Zilant

Megafauna

Main article: List of megafauna in mythology and folklore

Giants

Main article: List of giants in mythology and folklore

Artificial creatures

This listing includes creatures that are man-made, mechanical or of alchemical origins.

Automaton (worldwide) – self-operating machine; most famous example is Greek mythology's Talos

Blodeuwedd (Welsh) – wife of Lleu Llaw Gyffes

Brazen head (Medieval legends) – living head of brass purported to be able to answer any question given to it

Doll Woman- (Lenape) lifelike doll spirit. Must stay properly appeased, or will cause mischief in the home.

Frankenstein's monster

Galatea (Greek) – ivory statue carved by Pygmalion

Gingerbread man – from German folk tales

Golem (Jewish) – animated humanoid construct

Homunculus (Alchemy) – diminutive, animated construct

Nephele (Greek) – nymph formed from a cloud by Zeus to resemble the goddess Hera

Shabti (Egyptian) – clay model used as workers

Tokeloshe (Zulu mythology) – diminutive, hairy humanoid with various magical powers

Tilberi (Iceland) – creations of witches from a rib bone and wool for the purpose of stealing milk

Tsukumogami (Japanese) – objects that come to life, of their own accord, after 100 years

Tulpa (Tibetan Buddhism) – creature brought to life through meditation

Tupilaq (Inuit) – large statues brought to life to serve witches and shamans

Ushabti (Egyptian) – clay guardians/assistants

Various objects animated by gods, demons and spirits in mythology, legend and folklore

Body parts, creatures associated with

Blood

See also: Category:Mythological hematophages

Alan

Chupacabra

Dhampir

Preta

Golden Hind

Kappa

Kekkai
Lamia
Manananggal
Mandurugo
Redcap
Rokurokubi
Sigbin
Vampire
Werewolf
Yuki-onna
Bone
Bloody Bones
Gashadokuro
Grim Reaper
Skeleton
Eye
Argus Panoptes
Basilisk
Catoblepas
Cockatrice
Cyclopes
Gorgon
Hitotsume-kozou
Lamia
Lynx
Mokumokuren
One-eyed

Main article: List of one-eyed creatures in mythology and fiction

Face
Asura
Deva / Devi
Noppera-bō
Hair
Futakuchi-onna
Harionago
Mavka
Medusa
Head

Further information: Polycephaly
Amphisbaena
Cerberus
Chimera
Chonchon
Double-headed eagle
Dullahan

Hekatonkheires
Kishi
Hydra
Lernaean Hydra
Nine-headed Bird
Nukekubi
Rokurokubi
Orthrus
Shesha
Penanggalan
Wanyūdō
Xing Tian
Yacuruna
Yamata no Orochi
Limbs
Asura (Indian)
Deva / Devi (Indian)
Hekatonkheires
Hinkypunk - (English) variation on Will o the wisp. A single, incorporeal leg hopping around bogs with a lantern.
Kui
O'nya:ten (Iroquoian) aka Dry Fingers. Mummified hand. Appears and leaps out at people after certain transgressions, such as speaking ill of the dead, or butting into other people's personal business.
Sleipnir
Three-legged bird
Mouth
Futakuchi-onna
Kuchisake-onna
Skin
Selkie
Skin-walker
Swan maiden
Tail
Bakeneko
Kitsune
Yamata no Orochi
Kumiho
Hulder
Nguruvilu
Neck
Serpopard
Rokurokubi
Vampire
Torso

Manananggal

Geryon[5]

Abdomen

Pixiu

Concepts, creatures associated with

Battle, Vengeance, Violence, and War

See also: Category:War deities

Androktasiai

Erinyes

Hipag

Hysminai

Keres

Lemures

Makhai

Onryō

Phonoi

Valkyrie

Vengeful ghost

Birth and Rebirth

See also: Category:Phoenix birds

Aralez

Phoenix

Ubume

Death and Immortality

See also: List of ghosts

See also the categories Undead and Personifications of death

Abasy

Ammit

Banshee

Demon

Devil

Dullahan

Ghost

Grim Reaper

Ox-Head and Horse-Face

Phoenix

Undead

Valkyrie

Vampire

Dream, the Mind, and Sleep

See also: Category:Sleep in mythology and folklore

Alp

Baku

Carbuncle

Devil

Drude
Incubus / Succubus
Mermaid
Nightmare
Nue
Oni
Sandman
Satori
Zduhać
Evil Eye and Sight
Alp (folklore)
Basilisk
Balor of the Evil Eye – king of the Fomorians, a race of giants, and a cyclops (Irish)
Catoblepas
Cockatrice
Gorgon – woman with hair made of living, venomous snakes, and eyes that turned men to stone (Greek):
Medusa – once a human, Medusa and her sisters were cursed to be terrible monsters by Athena (Greek)
Euryale – second eldest of the three vicious Gorgon sisters (Greek)
Stheno – eldest of the Gorgon Sisters (Greek)
Fertility and Human Sexuality
Alan
Boto
Faun
Gancanagh
German
Incubus / Succubus
Maenad
Nymph
Pombero
Popobawa
Satyr
Sileni / Silenus
Unicorn
Zemya / Zemepatis
Simurgh
Fortune, Luck, and Wealth
Carbuncle (Chilote) – said to be the "guardian of the metals"[3]
Dwarf
Egbere
Genie
Leib-Olmai
Leprechaun
Matagot

Pixiu
Sarimanok
Sigbin
Yaksha / Yakshini
Light
Angel
Chalkydri
Deity
Lampetia
Will-o'-the-wisp
Dragon
Love and Romance
See also: Category:Love and lust gods
Cupid / Eros / Cherub
Gancanagh
Selkie
Swan maiden
Madame White Snake
Melusine
Tennin
Undine
Sound
Banshee
Encantado
Fenghuang
Fossegrim
Mermaid
Nue
Siren
Yamabiko
Speech
Main article: Talking animal
Gef
Satan
Time and Technology
See also: Category:Time and fate gods
Chronos
Father Time
Gremlin
Wisdom
Baba Yaga
Bai Ze
Griffin
Salmon of Wisdom
Sphinx

Demons

See list of theological demons

Elements, creatures associated with

Aether

Chalkydri

Deity

Elemental

Spirit

Angel

Demon

Devil

Yokai

Nymph

Elf

Fairy

Air and wind

See also: List of flying mythological creatures

Ala

Elemental

Feldgeister

Zduhać

Darkness

Black dog

Bogeyman

Enenra

Ghost

Grim Reaper

Wechuge

Wendigo

Shadow People

Vampire

Werewolf

Oni

Gashadokuro

Camazotz

Wild Hunt

Hell Hound

Earth and subterranean

See also: Category:Earth spirits

Asag

Bluecap

Elemental

Dwarf

Earth Dragon

Gargoyle

Giant
Gnome
Goblin
Golem
Knocker (folklore)
Monopod
Nymph
Ogre
Oread
Ten Ten-Vilu
Troll
Fire
Further information: Fire-breathing monster
Basan
Bluecap
Cherufe
Chimera
Dragon
Elemental
Enenra
Ifrit
Hellhound
Lampad
Phoenix
Salamander
Light and rainbow
Angel
Chalkydri
Light Elf
Rainbow crow
Rainbow Serpent
Metal and gold
Alicanto[1]
Pixiu
Carbunclo[3]
Chrysomallos
Cyclopes
Griffin
Gnome
Leprechaun
Bulgasari
Thunder and lightning
Chinese dragon
Cyclopes
Feldgeister

Kitsune

Raijū

Thunderbird

Valkyrie

Water

See also the categories Mythological water creatures and Water spirits

Afanc

Amefurikozō

Aspidochelone

Bloody Bones

Buggane

Bunyip

Camenae

Capricorn

Cetus

Charybdis

Chinese Dragon

Cai Cai-Vilu

Crinaeae

Davy Jones' Locker

Draug

Each uisge

Elemental

Fish People

Fossegrim

Fur-bearing trout

Gargouille

Grindylow

Haetae

Hippocamp

Hydra

Ichthyocentaur

Jasconius

Jengu

Kappa

Kelpie

Kraken

Lake monster

Lavellan

Leviathan

Loch Ness monster

Lorelei

Lusca

Makara

Melusine

Mami Wata
Mermaid / Merman
Merrow
Morgens
Muc-sheilch
Naiad
Näkki
Nereid
Nix
Nymph
Pisces
Ponaturi
River gods
Rusalka
Samebito
Sea monster
Sea serpent
Selkie
Shen
Siren
Taniwha
Tiamat
Triton
Ondine
Vodyanoy
Water dragon
Water leaper
Water sprite
Yacuruna
Zaratan
Habitats, creatures associated with
Cave and underground
Dwarf
European dragon
Gnome
Goblin
Golem
Grootslang
Leprechaun
Troll
Yaoguai
Celestial and heaven
Angel
Chalkydri
Deva / Devi

Feathered serpent
Heavenly Llama[4]
Pegasus
Grim Reaper
Swan Maiden
Tennin
Three-legged bird
Valkyrie
Desert
Amphisbaena
Basilisk
Cockatrice
Ghoul
Mongolian Death Worm
Sphinx
Temperate forest and woodland
See also: Category:Forest spirits
Äbädä (Turkic) – forest spirit with shoes on the wrong feet
Ajatar
Bigfoot
Dryad
Elf
Green Man
Irrwurz
Leshy
Lindworm
Mavka
Moss people
Owlman
Satyr
Unicorn
Tropical forest and jungle
Curupira
Dingonek
Mapinguari
Manticore
Saci
Temperate grassland and garden
Fairy
Gnome
Savanna
Ennedi tiger
Werehyena
Lake and river
See also: Category:Lake monsters

Ahuitzotl
Bak
Bunyip
Chinese dragon
Dobhar-chú
Encantado
Grootslang
Iara
Jiaolong
Kappa
Kelpie
Lake monster
Hydra
Loch Ness Monster
Mizuchi
Mugwump
Naiad
Nixie
Ogopogo
Ondine
Rainbow serpent
Rusalka
Ryujin
Shellycoat
Warlock
Yacuruna
Mountain and hill
See also: Category:Mining spirits
Alp
Dwarf
Fenghuang
Griffin
Hippogriff
Mountain Giant
Kamaitachi
Mavka
Oread
Patupaiarehe
Rübezahl
Satyr
Tengu
Yeti
Sea
See also: Sea monster and Greek sea goddesses
Amikuk

Aspidochelone
Bishop-fish
Charybdis
Cai Cai-Vilu
Dragon King
Fish People
Hippocamp
Leviathan
Jormungand
Kraken
Mermaid / Merman
Nereid
Sea monk
Sea serpent
Selkie
Shen
Siren
Tritons
Umibōzu
Water Dragon
Yacuruna
Swamp and marsh
See also: Category:Swamp monsters
Błudnik
Bunyip
Grootslang
Lernaean Hydra
Honey Island Swamp monster
Mokele-mbembe
Swamp monster
Will-o'-the-wisp
Volcano and lava
Cherufe
Phoenix
Salamander
Polar, ice, and winter
Akhlut
Amarok
Hrimthurs
Ijiraq
Jotun
Qiqirn
Saumen Kar
Tizheruk
Wechuge

Wendigo
Yeti
Ymir
Yuki-onna
Frau Holle
Urban and house
Main article: Household deity
See also: Category:Household deities
Banshee
Boggart
Brownie
Domovoi – Slavic house spirit
Dvorovoi – Slavic yard spirit
Duende
Jinn
Kobold
Tomte
Vampire
Zashiki-warashi
Underworld and hell
See also: Category:Underworld deities

Cerberus
Ammit
Cerberus
Cyclopes
Demon
Devil
Earth Dragon
Garm
Hekatonkheires
Hellhound
Ifrit
Ox-Head and Horse-Face
Preta
Humanoids
See Mythic humanoids
Hybrids
See List of hybrid creatures
Astronomical objects, creatures associated with
Sun
Chalkydri beings from the Second Book of Enoch[6]
Kua Fu a giant in China
Three-legged bird in China, Korea, and Japan
Phoenix in Greek Mythology

Moon
Jade rabbit
Werewolf
Werejaguar
Alien
Constellation
Azure Dragon
Black Tortoise
Capricorn
Centaur
Heavenly Llama[4]
Ladon
Nemean Lion
Pegasus
Phoenix
Vermilion Bird
Yellow Dragon
White Tiger
World
See also: List of mythological places
World Elephant
World Tree
World Turtle
Creatures associated with plants
See also: Category:Trees in mythology
Alraune
Clickbok Tree- (American) An oak tree planted by a slave which later comes to life to protect his wife and son from a vengeful slave overseer.
Dryad
Ghillie Dhu
Green Man
Hamadryad
Jubokko
Kodama
Leshy
Mandrake
Penghou
Snake Tree- (Lakota) Tree brought to life by a witch. Lashes out at anything that comes close with branches covered in poisonous thorns that paralyze the victim.
Spriggan
Tree of life
Vampire pumpkins and watermelons (Romani)
Vegetable Lamb of Tartary
Zapam Zucum
Zaqqum

See Trees in mythology

Shapeshifters

Main article: List of shapeshifters

Creatures associated with times

Day and diurnal

Griffin

Jackalope

Unicorn (rather resembles the moon)

Wolpertinger

Night and nocturnal

Amarok

Bigfoot

Ennedi tiger

Ghoul

Owlman

Werewolf

Vampire

Undead

See also: Undead and Category:Ghosts

Aswang

Banshee – (Scottish, Gaelic, Irish)

Chindi - (Navajo) The dark side of the soul which has the ability to remain behind in the earth after death and become a sort of dark spirit.

Drekavac (Croatia) Name used for several distinct undead monsters.

Ghost – (Worldwide)

Inipi- (California Native) shapeshifting ghosts

Jikininki

Kuchisake-onna

Lugat (Albanian)

Poltergeist – (Worldwide)

Preta

Revenant

Sluagh

Spirit – (Worldwide)

Tei Pai Wanka - (Wampanoag) Term for swamp lights in Algonquian lore. Enslaved souls of people taken by the Little People who are used to scare people who've done wrong or lure them to their deaths.

Wanagi- (Lakota) Lakota name for Siouan shadow people. Essentially ghosts.

Wewe Gombel

Wili

Will o' the wisp – Jack o lantern (English)

Wraith

Yurei

Ghosts in Hindu Mythology: Bhoot, Baital and Pishacha

Corporeal

See also: List of vampires in folklore and mythology and Category: Corporeal undead

Draugr

Fext

Ghoul

Jiangshi

Lich

Manananggal

Mullo (Romani) variation on a vampire.

Mummy (undead) (modern interpretation)

Myling

Nukekubi

Pontianak

Skeleton

Vampire

Zombie

Miscellaneous

Anaye - (Navajo) various monsters that take the forms of animals, living objects and other things. Derived from a time when men and women bet on who would last the longest without the other sex and the women pleasuring themselves with whatever random things they thought would do the job, which caused their chosen toys to father them monstrous, man-eating children.

Daimon

Demon

Fairy

Familiar

Genie – or Jinn, Djinn

Monster

Sprite

Yōkai

References

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Alicanto". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. pp. 47–48. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

Quintana Mansilla, Bernardo. "El Carbunco". *Chiloé mitológico* (in Spanish).

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Carbunclo". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. p. 130. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Llamas". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. p. 415. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

"Geryon". *Theoi*. Retrieved 10 February 2017. a three-bodied, four-winged giant

Platt, Rutherford (1926). *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*. Entry: The Book of the Secrets of Enoch chapter XII

vte

Lists of fictional life forms

Plants

Plants

Animals

Animal superheroesArthropodsFishInvertebratesParasitesWorms
Amphibians
Frogs and toads
Reptiles
CrocodiliansDinosaursSnakesTurtles
Birds
Birds of preyDucks animationPenguins
Mammals
Canines
AnimationComicsLiteratureDogs prose and poetrycomicslive-action filmlive-action
televisionanimationanimated filmanimated televisionvideo gamesFoxesWolves
Felines
AnimationComicsFilmLiteratureTelevisionBig cats animation
Rodents
AnimationComicsLiterature
Non-human primates
AnimationComicsFilmLiteratureTelevision
Ungulates
AnimationHorsesLiteraturePachydermsPigs
Miscellaneous
BatsBearsCetaceansMarsupialsMusteloidsPinnipedsRabbits and haresRhinogradentia
Humanoids
General
ComicsFilmLiteratureTelevisionVideo games
Specific
AlienAquaticAvianReptilianSquid-faced
Other
ExtraterrestrialsParasitesSymbionts
Legendary
Fictional dragons popular culturefilm and televisiongamesliteratureFictional
ghostsFictional mermaidsFictional vampiresFictional werewolves
Theological
Fictional angelsFictional demonsFictional deities
Related
CryptidsLegendary creaturesDragons in mythology and folkloreEquines Winged
horsesWinged unicornsGiantsHybridsVampires by region
Categories: Lists of legendary creaturesMythology-related lists
This page was last edited on 13 December 2025, at 13:28 (UTC).
Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;
additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and
Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit organization.
Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of
ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view
Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Mythic humanoids

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This section has multiple issues. Please help improve it or discuss these issues on the talk page. (Learn how and when to remove these messages)

This section includes a list of references, related reading, or external links, but its sources remain unclear because it lacks inline citations. (January 2023)

This section relies largely or entirely on a single source. (January 2023)

Artistic depiction of a Yeti, a mythical humanoid taller than an average human said to inhabit the Himalayan region of Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet.

Mythic humanoids are legendary, folkloric, or mythological creatures that are part human, or that resemble humans through appearance or character. Each culture has different mythical creatures that come from many different origins, and many of these creatures are humanoids. They are often able to talk and in many stories they guide the hero on their journey.

Africa

Jengu – (West African) Beautiful, mermaid-like creatures.

Mami Wata – Mermaid-like water-dwelling humanoids from West African mythology

Ogbanje – (Igbo) spirit who is born into the same family repeatedly and dies young on purpose to drive them into grief.

Werehyena – Hyaenidae therianthropic creature common in the folklore of North and East Africa, and West Asia.

Americas

Adlet – Dog-like humanoids in Inuit folklore.

Anung Ité – (Lakota) female spirit with two faces and spikes protruding from elbows.

Variations from other tribes known as Sharp Legs and Sharp Elbows.

Asin – (Pacific Northwest) Often called the Basket Woman, this was an ogre-like monster who sneaked up on and captured naughty children, throwing them into a basket on her back to take home and eat.

Baykok – (Anishinaabeg) skeletal monster. Ghost of human cursed for horrific acts in life.

Biboon – (Anishinaabeg) Winter Spirit. Descends from Hudson Bay to cover everything in winter. Described as an old man.

Bigfoot – Large, hairy, and bipedal ape-like creature taller than a human and said to inhabit forests in North America.

Boo hag – (American) A shapeshifting witch in Gullah Geechee culture that feeds on the life force of people vampirically in the night. Has also absorbed aspects of elf and Night Mare beliefs from European culture.

Buffalo People – (Siouan) Race of shapeshifting witches who inhabited the earth before humans. The gods and the Buffalo People intermarry to create the first humans, who are initially rivals over control of the earth. Later, the Buffalo People make peace, gift earth to the humans and become the actual Buffalo. Several prominent mythological figures in Siouan mythology are Buffalo people- including Kakanjka, Wazija, Gnaski, Anung Ite, etc. Buffalo Witches also appear in some Ohio Native lore- particularly Wyandot and Shawnee.

Chindi – (Navajo) The dark side of the soul, which can often separate in death and remain behind in a place as a sort of dark spirit.

Ciguapa – Mythical women who live in the high mountains of the Dominican Republic in the Caribbean. Of human female form with brown or dark blue skin, backward facing feet, and very long manes of smooth, glossy hair covering their bodies; nocturnal, hostile, to be avoided.

El Cucuy – Boogeyman to scare children into being good in Spain, Portugal and South America. Name comes from the word for "head". Seen as shadowy figure prowling on rooftops, said to eat or kidnap children.

Encantado – Amazon river dolphins said to occasionally take human form in South American folklore.

Faceless Spirit – (Iroquois) appears as female maiden with no face. Collects life force of dead things in her basket and returns it to the Creator to be recycled into new life.

Fiura – Evil creature in Chilean mythology, a small, nasty woman with large breasts.

Headless Corpse – (Southeast) headless body that runs around on all fours with gaping mouth where head should be.

Heyoka – (Lakota) People chosen by the Thunder Beings to be Medicine Men.

Possessing supernatural abilities. A Heyoka must have a vision of a Thunder Being or be struck by lightning. May have visions of the future or other abilities. Appear to others as backwards. Acts in backwards behaviors. They are mysterious and move between worlds. thunderbirds.

Ijiraq – (Inuit) shapeshifting kidnapper with red eyes and a sideways face.

Inipi – (Southern California) Mostly known from the Kawaiisu people, this is the shapeshifting ghost of a human. It may take virtually any form, with given stories depicting it as looking normal, or as a skeleton with extremely long nails. Like modern western ghost lore, it may be aware of its surroundings, or just going through the

motions obliviously. They say it starts walking once a person's death is assured, even before they actually die. To get rid of one, a person blows across one's open palm at it. Kalku – A Chiloe and Mapuche mythological sorcerer who controls crows and contains dark magic and negative powers.

Kushtaka – Shape-shifting otter creature found in the folklore of the Tlingit and Tsimshian people.

Little People – various fairy/elf-like beings believed in across North America. Some are a couple inches tall and look like humans, some a couple feet and are hairy or look ugly, some take the form of human children. Different types can be mischievous, evil or beneficial.

Mesingw – (Algonquian) Lenape name for the spirit of the forests. Hairy dwarf who wears a wooden mask to hide deformed face and rides on the back of a white stag.

Mothman – A winged, legendary man with the features of a moth.

Pombero – Mythical humanoid creature of small stature being from Guaraní mythology.

Qalupalik – (Inuit) female entities with green skin, webbed hands and claws that emit shrieks that paralyze men.

Sabuqwanilnu – (Algonquian) Migmaa name for a mermaid like being believed in across Algonquian speaking peoples. Top half human, bottom half fish, able to control and predict the weather and travel between the human world and the underworld through water. Anishinaabeg myth refers to one trying to take a human husband, the act of bringing him to their world and going through with the marriage turning him into one of them.

Sasquatch – see Bigfoot.

Shade – Spirit or ghost of a dead person, residing in the underworld, believed to be a shadowy place. Common to beliefs in the Near East, e.g. Islamic Jinn and the Choctaw Nalusa Chito.

Shadow people – dark, nonspecific apparitions in folklore, often taken to be neutral, or harbingers of events.

Skin-walker – (Navajo) Type of witch with ability to disguise themselves as an animal or turn into one.

Squawkowtemus – (Abenaki) Female spirit that resides in swamps. Its cries lure people close. If it touches them, they die.

Stick Indians – (Pacific Northwest) monsters who materialize from out of the roots of trees and bushes and attack men.

Stikini - (Seminole) A witch that primarily transforms into a were-owl monster at night, after vomiting up its soul and organs and hanging them in a tree.

Tariaksuq – (Inuit) anthropomorphic caribou people who exist as their own separate society in a parallel universe. Only their shadows can be seen in this world, though sometimes glimpses of them can be caught out of the corner of the eye. Only become visible when killed.

Thunderbirds – (Eastern Woodlands) most tribes in Eastern Woodlands claim

Thunderbirds often shapeshift into people. They live in secret villages atop mountains.

Shawnee say they speak backwards.

Towin – (Lakota) Female spirit who guards the road to the afterlife in Lakota lore. Souls stop at her lodge while she judges their worthiness to progress on to Wanagi Tamakoce

(heaven). Said to mean Blue Woman, but can also translate as Aunt. Pronounced tow-wih

Trauco – Dwarf or goblin-like creature that inhabits the woods of Chiloé islands in Chile.

Tzitzimítl – (Aztec) female demons who worked for several deities and were worshipped by midwives. Attacked the sun during eclipses and were alleged to be the prophesied cause of the end of the world. Their queen, Itzapopolotl, was a skeletal obsidian butterfly demon. Several other Uto-Aztec peoples as far north as the Shoshone had similar mythological creatures to her in their lore.

Wanaǵi/ Wanun̄chi – (Siouan) the spirits of the dead, almost always take form of shadow people. The word is also the word for soul and shadow. Sometimes referred to as the Night Spirits. Commonly seen at night around burial grounds/mounds.

Pronounced wah-nah-khee/ wah-nuh-chee.

Water Babies – (American Southwest) evil spirit who resides near springs or ponds and takes the form of a crying baby, luring people to pick it up, after which, it becomes so heavy that it crushes them to death.

Wechuge – (Athabaskan) Cannibal said to be a person who has been possessed or overwhelmed by the monster, or a demonic presence. In return, the person becomes "too strong". Related to the regions of Canada.

Wendigo – (Algonquian) A human possessed by evil spirit to cannibalize humans and is never sated.

Werecoyote – A canine therianthrope creature.

Yacuruna – Hairy beings with deformed feet and their heads turned backwards.

Zombie – An undead human which preys on the living, originating in Haitian folklore.

Asia

Äbädä - (Turkic) protective forest spirit. Can take human form, but usually portrayed as having blue skin, green hair and horns.

Abasy – (Yakut) One eyed, one armed, one legged monsters. Souls who serve the underworld god, cause madness and disease and ride two headed, wingless dragons like horses.

Alyp Khara Aat Mogoidoon – (Yakut) chief of the Abasy. Described as a giant with three heads with six arms and legs and made of iron.

Angel – (Abrahamic religions) Divine messengers in Abrahamic religions, often depicted in humanoid form.

Anito – Ancestor spirits and heroic spirits and evil gods

Aswang – Shapeshifting Philippine human eating ghouls, vampires and demons.

Bak – Assamese aqueous creature that can take human form after killing them.

Diwata – Philippine fairies and celestial beings and deities/spirits.

Dokkaebi – A mythical being in Korean folklore or fairy tales. Although usually frightening, it could also represent a humorous, grotesque-looking ogre or goblin.

Ebu Gogo – Human-like creatures in Indonesian mythology.

Engkanto – Elf-like creatures in Philippine mythology most are slender fair skinned and fair hair, some are completely jet black

Garuda – Vishnu's bird-like mount.

Ghoul – (Arabian) Monstrous flesh-eating spirits, jinn, or shayatin associated with graveyards.

Gwisin – General term for a Korean ghost.

Hibagon – The Japanese equivalent of Bigfoot.

Hitotsume-kozou – A Yōkai that takes on the appearance of a bald, one-eyed child.

Jiangshi – A being in Chinese legends and folklore similar to zombie or vampire.

Jinn – (Arabian) Genie-like beings.

Jorōgumo – A spider that can change its appearance into that of a seductive woman.

Kappa – A turtle-like yōkai which is about the size of a child.

Kinari – Beautiful, slender and androgynous creatures with bird wings from Hindu and Buddhist mythology.

Kitsune, huli jing, kumiho, and hồ ly tinh – Fox spirits in Japanese, Chinese, Korean, and Vietnamese folklore respectively.

Manananggal – A self-segmenting humanoid which preys on humans in Philippine folklore.

Mandurugo – (Filipino) Harpy-like vampires with the body of birds of prey and the faces of beautiful women

Mangkukulam (kulam) – Tagalog for Filipino witch employing black magic or using hexes for revenge and punishment reasons.

Nāga – Divine, or semi-divine, race of half-human, half-serpent beings that reside in the netherworld (Patala), and can occasionally take human or part-human form. Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism mythology.

Nukekubi – Rokurokubi whose heads come off and float about.

Nuno – Dwarf-like creature in Philippine mythology.

Oni – (Japanese) Yōkai which are similar to ogres or demons.

Pugot – (Philippines) Mythical fiend found in the Ilocos Region.

Rannamaari - (Maldives) Sea monster/demon with similar mythology to Orochi. Defeated entirely just by the existence of Islam and nothing else.

Rokurokubi – Yōkai with long necks or removable heads.

Tengu – Legendary creatures with human and bird features in Japanese folklore.

Tennin – Spiritual beings found in Japanese Buddhism that are similar to western angels, nymphs or fairies.

Tikbalang – (Filipino) Tall, bony creatures with the features of a horse.

Tiyanak – Vampiric creature in Philippine mythology that imitates the form of a child.

Vanara – Man-ape species with human intelligence in Hindu scriptures.

Yama-uba – (Japanese) Monstrous crone with cannibalistic tendencies.

Yeren – Legendary creature said to be an as yet undiscovered hominid residing in the remote mountainous forested regions of western Hubei, China.

Yeti – An ape-like entity taller than an average human said to inhabit the Himalayan region of Nepal, Bhutan, and Tibet.

Yuki-onna – Spirit or yōkai in Japanese folklore associated with snow.

Weretiger – Feline therianthropic creature, Asian version.

Europe

Abarimon – Savage race of people with backwards feet.

Ala – Female demon that brings bad weather to farms in Balkan folklore.

Alp – Nightmare creature from Germanic Mythology.

Anguane – (Germany, Austria) Female spirits with hooves and dangling breasts.

Associated with aiding lost persons and in female fertility.

Arkan sonney – Fairy creature resembling a pig in Manx folklore.

Astomi – Legendary race of people who had no mouths and no need to eat or drink anything at all, surviving by smelling apples, flowers, and perfumes.

Baba Yaga – Slavic witch, crone and liminal guardian to the Otherworld.

Bannik – Slavic bathhouse spirit.

Banshee – Female spirit in Irish folklore who heralds the death of a family member by screaming, shrieking, or keening.

Basajaun, Basandere – (Basque) hairy woodland spirit

Baumseele – (German) the personified spirits of sacred trees, which may or may not be elves. There are references in Scotland and Englands of recognizing sacred trees as "Tree Men," tasked to guard the realm, as well as using a similar tremann term in Scandinavia. It's difficult to know whether it's referring to elves, gods or a mix of both depending on the situation.

Blafard – Albinos long surmised by Europeans to be the result of some kind of simian crossbreeding.

Blemmyes (or akephaloi) – Legendary race of people with no heads and facial features on their chests.

Bluecap – (English) elf like beings of the mines, who sometimes appear as a floating blue flame or an elf in a blue cap. Seen as derivation to Redcap.

Boggart – Household spirits or genius loci.

Boogeyman – A featureless, androgynous creature used by adults to frighten children into good behavior.

Brownie – Scottish household spirit, performs tasks at night, independent, changeable.

Bugbear – Type of hobgoblin comparable to the bogeyman.

Centaur, Greek kentaurides – Men and women with the lower bodies of horses in Greek mythology.

Changeling – Fae child left in place of a human child stolen by the fae.

Clurichaun – Irish fairy resembling a leprechaun.

Crone – Old woman who may be characterized as disagreeable, malicious, or sinister, often magical or supernatural, making her either helpful or not.

Cyclops – Grotesque, one-eyed humanoids, sons of Uranus in Greek myth.

Cynocephalus – Dog-headed humans.

Dearg Due – (Irish) fairy Undead woman who committed suicide after unfair treatment by a cruel husband.

Demon – (Abrahamic religions) Malevolent beings associated with the devil in Christianity, often depicted in humanoid form.

Dhampir – (Albanian, Slavic) half human, half vampire, resulting from the mating of a male vampire and human woman exclusively.

Dökkálfar – Dark elves in Nordic mythology.

Domovoi – Protective house spirit in Slavic folklore.

Doppelgänger – Look-alike or double of a living person.

Drak – (German) elf partly shapeshifted into a lizard. Likely represents the Hazel Worm as the protective spirit motif in German culture. A French version called a Drac is said to be a type of Lutin or French elf.

Draugar – (Norse) Undead creatures that guard their burial mounds.

Dryad – Tree nymph or tree spirit from Greek mythology.

Dullahan – Irish fairy, the headless rider.

Dwarf – (Germanic) Human-shaped being often dwelling in mountains and in the earth.

Elf – Supernatural being in Germanic mythology and folklore.

Empusa (or empousa, pl. empousai) – A shape-shifting being with a copper leg in Greek mythology.

Erinyes – Greek female chthonic deities of vengeance.

Fairy – Mythical spirits or legendary creatures in European folklore, also known as fae or fair folk among many other names. Commonly depicted as having beautiful insectoid wings.

Faun – Humanoid beings with the horns and lower bodies of goats.

Fetch – (Irish) an exact, spectral double of a living human; can appear as an omen.

Fext – (Slavic) Undead warriors who can only be killed with bullets made of glass

Finmen – (Scottish) Mermaid like beings from Orkney lore.

Fomorians – (Irish) Army of monstrous troll-like/goblin-like humanoid beings.

Furies – Greek goddesses of vengeance.

Gargoyle – (French) Carved or formed grotesques said to scare away demons.

German – (Slavic) a farm protective spirit. Mock burials of an effigy of it were held to summon rain or fair weather for their crops.

Giant, giantess – Large beings of human appearance but prodigious size and strength.

Gigantes – Race of great strength, aggression, and size in Greek and Roman mythology.

Gnome – (Alchemy) Typically said to be a small humanoid that lives underground, bearded and wears a Phrygian cap.

Goblin – (Medieval folklore) Small, grotesque humanoids.

Golem – (Jewish) artificial being of clay created by a Rabbi with a magic spell to defend his community.

Gorgons – (Greek) Three dread and monstrous sisters commonly depicted with snake hair and other beastly features. Two were immortal, Medusa was not. Turned anyone who looked at them to stone.

Green Man – (English) Folklore figure resembling old man covered in foliage that is carved often in old churches. Possibly the same as the Scottish Ghillie Dhu.

Gremlins – Grotesque humanoid creatures commonly depicted as mischievous and inclined to sabotage machinery.

Hag – a kind of fairy or goddess appearing as wizened elderly woman, neither totally malevolent and sometimes benevolent.

Haltija – A spirit, gnome, or elf-like creature in Finnish mythology that guards, helps, or protects something or somebody.

Harpy – (Greek) Female creatures with bird wings.

Hecatonchires – in Greek mythology, three sons of Uranus being hundred-handed giants with fifty heads.

Hobgoblins – Mischievous household spirits.

Hödekin – (German) elf like spirit who used to work for a bishop, but eventually came to do several horrific acts to the point that the bishop decided to exorcise him from his

home.

Hulder – Seductive forest creature found in Scandinavian folklore.

Hyter – (English) a lesser known type of fairy who disguise themselves as birds. Also, hikry, hyty or hike.

Imp – (Medieval folklore) A mischievous mythological being of small size, similar to a fairy or goblin.

Iratxo – (Basque) protective, elf-like spirit of farms. Given similar sculptures from Britain hiding secret phalluses, the Romans may have related it to the Greco-Roman God Priapus, who would threaten to rape thieves from farmers' fields.

Jötunn (pl. jötnar) – A Norse mythological race that live in Jötunheimr.

Kabouter – A tiny human-like creatures in Dutch folklore similar to the German kobold or Irish leprechaun.

Kallikantzaroi – Malevolent goblin-like creatures in Southeast European folklore, believed to dwell underground but come to the surface during the twelve days of Christmas.

Karnabo – An elephant-trunked humanoid in Ardennes folklore.

Kikimora – Female house spirit in Slavic (especially Eastern) folklore.

Kilmoulis (English) – diminutive minster with no mouth and a giant nose that snorts all its food.

Klabautermann (or Klabautermannikin, Kaboutermannikin) – A water kobold or nix in German folklore.

Knocker (or knacker, tommyknocker) – Mischievous subterranean, gnome-like spirits associates with mines in Celtic folklore.

Kobalos – An ancient Greek equivalent to a goblin.

Kobold – Shapeshifting German spirits.

Korrigan – Breton dwarves or fairies.

Krsnik – Vampire hunter from Slavic Mythology.

Lamia – (Greek) Beautiful, child-eating demon with a womans upper body and a snake tail.

Lamia 2 – (Basque) female water spirit with webbed bird feet. NOTE: There is also a Bulgarian Lamya and Albanian Llamja, which is described as a nature spirit similar to the Greek Lamia, ergo these may have originated from the same mythological creature of Basque and Illyrian origin.

Lares – Guardian deities of ancient Rome.

Leanan sídhe – Fairy-like being of Irish folklore.

Lemures – (Roman) Restless spirits of the dead.

Leprechaun – (Irish) Little bearded men dressed in green, associated with luck, gold at the end of a rainbow and wishes.

Lidérc – (Hungarian) Some sort of shapeshifting monster created through magical means which latches onto a person, bestowing upon them riches, but slowly drains them of their lifeforce through sex and blood drinking until they die.

Ljósálfar – Light elves in Nordic mythology.

Lutin – A lutin is a type of hobgoblin in French folklore and fairy tales. Female lutins are called lutines.

Manticore – Creature with a man's head, a lion's body, bat wings, and a scorpion tail.

Mauro, Maura (Portugal, Spain) – Class of humanoid beings that appear to relate to ancient Celtic culture, but are quite varied in abilities, appearance and function. Stories seem to random mix of gods, druids, ghosts, nature spirits and the occasional actual Moor invader from Africa.

Mermaid, merman – Women and men with the lower bodies of fish.

Minotaur – (Greek) A human with the head and sometimes legs of a bull.

Moirai – Lesser trio of female deities assigned with deciding and weaving the fates of humans. Usually called the Fates, this is a pan-European concept, with the Roman Parcae, the Scandinavian Norns, Shakespeare's Weird Sisters, the Bulgarian Orisnizi and Slavic Rozhanitsy easily identifiable.

Monaciello – Little men dressed as monks.

Monopod – One-legged mythical humanoids.

Moss people

Naiad – A type of water nymph.

Nereid – Female water spirits of Greece.

Nix – Germanic/ Scandinavian shape-shifting water spirit. Also Neck, Necken, Nixie, Nocken.

Nymph – (Greek) Female nature spirits.

Oceanid – Sea nymphs, the daughters of Oceanus and Tethys.

Ogre, ogress –(Medieval folklore) Large, grotesque humanoids.

Orcs – (Tolkien) Humanoids with grey or green skin and tusks.

Pixie – Benign fairy-like beings. Also Peskie.

Poltergeist – Ghosts known for causing physical disturbances.

Púca (or pookha, puck) – (Irish) Mischievous shape-changing creatures which can take human form.

Raedieguovlu – (Saami) Restless souls encountered in the wilderness. Place people who pay attention to them into trances, convincing them to wander off and die alone.

Redcap – Malevolent, murderous dwarf, goblin, elf or fairy found in the folklore of the Anglo-Scottish border regions.

Revenant – (French, English, Irish) Medieval walking corpses which escape their Graves and supernaturally invade homes to attack the living

Roggenmuhme – (German) female demon who is the mother of the Feldgeisters, light and dark elves who haunt the household and farmer's fields.

Rusalka – Slavic water spirits.

Sandman – Man who puts people to sleep and brings good dreams by sprinkling magical sand onto the eyes of sleeping humans.

Satyr, satyress – Humanoid beings or nature spirits with goat-like features such as horns and hooves.

Seelie – Scottish term meaning "happy" or "blessed", used in several fairy names.

Selkie – Scottish mythical creature that resembles a seal in the water but assumes human form on land.

Sidhe – Irish race of fae that make their homes in mounds.

Siren – Beautiful yet dangerous creatures typically depicted as women-headed birds which lure sailors with their enchanting voices to shipwreck on rocky coasts.

Slavic fairies – Supernatural beings in Slavic folklore.

Sluagh – (Irish) flying hosts of the unforgiven dead in Irish and Scottish folklore
Sphinx – A creature with the body of a lion and the head of a human.
Spriggan – A grotesquely ugly mischievous fairy or forest spirit from Cornish folklore.
Sprite – Fairy, ghost, or elf-like creatures.
Stallo – (Saami) Large, man eating, dim witted, humanoid monster
Struthopodes – Humanoids whose males had enormous feet, but whose females had tiny feet
Succubus, incubus – (Judeo-Christian folklore) Seductive demons.
Svartalfar – Norse for "black elves".
Sylph – (Alchemy) Mythological air spirit.
Tantugou - (France/ Andorra) elderly hooded man who watches over land and animal holdings from predators and thieves. Sometimes also kidnaps bad children.
Taraxippus – (Greek) ghosts of those whose deaths involved horses in some sort of upsetting way. Dedicated altars existed in chariot racing arenas for riders to make offerings, so the ghosts would not upset their horses or try to get them killed.
Tartalo – (Basque) Cyclops like figure
Titans – Anthropomorphic pre-Olympian gods in ancient Greek and Roman mythology.
Tonttu – In Finnish mythology, a type of dwarf or goblin-like creature associated with households and farms; associated with the winter solstice and the Christmas season.
Troll – (Norse) Large, often grotesque humanoids.
Trow – (Scottish) Short, ugly spirits.
Tschäggättä – (Alps) race of hairy monsters that allegedly descend from the arrival of Celts to the region, thousands of years ago.
Undine – (Alchemy) Water nymph.
Vættir – Nature spirits in Scandinavian folklore.
Valkyrie – Female figure from Norse mythology, chooses who lives and who dies in battle.
Vâlvă – (Romanian) a sort of female fairy or elf like being who are protective over certain resources. Homage is paid to them in return for favors and gifts, but disrespect of either themselves or said gifts leads to retaliation.
Vampire – Being from Slavic folklore who subsists by feeding on the life essence of the living, generally in the form of blood.
Vila – Slavic version of nymphs or fairies, with the power of the wind.
Vioge – (English) emaciated scarecrow like monster from Jersey Isle. Grabs people, breaks their ankles and drags them home to eat.
Weiße Frauen
Werebear – Ursidae therianthropic creature.
Werecat – Feline therianthropic creature western version.
Werewolf – (Medieval folklore) Canine therianthropic creature.
Wraith – (British) Evil spirit who is said to haunt people through negative emotions.
Wulver – (Scottish) A type of dogman-like spirit from Scotland
Xana – Extraordinarily beautiful female creature in Asturian mythology.
Zmeu – (Romanian) Dragon-human hybrid monsters. Can fly and breathe fire, but also use weapons and ride horses.
Oceania/Polynesia

Australia

Bunyip – Large, waterhole-dwelling creature.

Junjudee – Small brown hairy man, roams the bush in South East Queensland; mischievous, even dangerous, impervious to weapons, strong.

Mumari – Hairy creature that lives in the bush, an evil spirit, that follows a person home in the night and tries to catch them.

Tall man – Malevolent being who comes out at night from cracks in the rocks or shadows of the rainforest in Queensland's North East tropics; nightmare creature, to be avoided at all costs, especially by Aborigines.

Yara-ma-yha-who – Vampire-like/dwarf/frog-like creature said to live in fig trees and attack its unexpected prey.

Yowie – Hominid reputed to live in the Australian wilderness.

Hawaii

Menhune – Small people who live in hidden Hawaiian valleys.

Nawao – Savage humanoids

New Zealand

Maero – Savage, arboreal humanoids.

Patupaiarehe – Pale-skinned/white-skinned elf-like/fairy-like creatures.

Solomon Islands

Kakamora – Small people living in forests, who sometimes stab people with their claws.

Other

Black-eyed children – Appear as human children with solid black eyes. Appear and beg entry into buildings or vehicles. If people relent, they begin to feel extremely ill.

Ghost – A lost soul or spirit that can be good or evil. Ghosts are typically created by a dead person having been bound to this world by regrets or emotions like anger.

Hat Man – A living shadow, often depicted with glowing red eyes and wearing a distinctive type of hat- usually a top hat or bowler cap.

Homunculus – artificial diminutive humanlike being created through alchemy.

Mummy – Deceased human or animal whose skin and organs have been preserved by mummification.

See also

Related lists

List of cryptids

List of fictional apes

List of hybrid creatures in mythology

List of legendary creatures by type

References

Sources

Wilkinson, P. (2019). *Myths & Legends: An illustrated guide to their origins and meanings*. DK.

External links

Media related to Mythic humanoids at Wikimedia Commons

vte

Apes

Category: Mythic humanoids

This page was last edited on 13 December 2025, at 16:09 (UTC).
Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;
additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and
Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit organization.
[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of
Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)
Wikimedia Foundation
Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)
[Create account](#)
[Log in](#)

[List of cryptids](#)

[Article](#)
[Talk](#)
[Read](#)
[View source](#)
[View history](#)

[Tools](#)
[Page semi-protected](#)
[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
"Cryptid" redirects here. Not to be confused with Cryptic or Cryptozoa. For the 2022 film,
Cryptid (film).
"Cryptids" redirects here. For the 2023 film, see Cryptids (film).
[Part of a series on the](#)
[Paranormal](#)
[Main articles](#)
[Skepticism](#)
[Parapsychology](#)
[Related](#)
[vte](#)

Cryptids are animals or other beings whose present existence is disputed or
unsubstantiated by science. Cryptozoology, the study of cryptids, is a pseudoscience
claiming that such beings may exist somewhere in the wild; it has been widely critiqued
by scientists.^{[1][2][3][4]} The subculture is regularly criticized for reliance on anecdotal
information^[5] and because in the course of investigating animals that most scientists
believe are unlikely to have existed, cryptozoologists do not follow the scientific method.
^[6] Many scientists have criticized the plausibility of cryptids due to lack of physical

evidence,[7] likely misidentifications[8] and misinterpretation of stories from folklore.[9] While biologists regularly identify new species following established scientific methodology, cryptozoologists focus on entities mentioned in the folklore record and rumor.

List

Aquatic or semi-aquatic

See also: List of lake monsters

Name	Other names	Description	Purported location	Depiction
Anguila peluda[10]	Hairy Eel	Pond animal	Pamital ravine, Canary Islands	
Bunyip[11]	Bahnyip	Amphibious creature	Australia	
Cadborosaurus[12]	Caddy	Sea animal	Pacific Coast of North America	
Champ[13]	Champy	Lake monster	Lake Champlain, North America	
Cryptid Whales[14][15]	Giglioli's Whale, Rhinoceros dolphin, High-finned sperm whale, Alula whale, Unidentified beaked whales	Sea animal	Pacific Ocean, Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean	
Dobhar-chú[16]	Water Hound, King Otter	Extra-large otter-like carnivorous aquatic mammal	Ireland	
Gloucester sea serpent[17]		Large serpent	Gloucester, Cape Ann	
Great auk (surviving populations)[18]	Pinguinus impennis, garefowl	Aquatic flightless bird	Northern Atlantic	
Iemisch[19]	Iemisch Listai	Mix of a jaguar and otter	Patagonia	
Igopogo[20]	Kempenfelt Kelly	Lake monster	Lake Simcoe, Ontario (Canada)	
Labyntyr Devil[21][22][23]	Labyntyrsky Chert[citation needed]	Lake monster	Oymyakonsky Ulus, Sakha Republic, Russia	
Loch Ness Monster[24]	Nessie	Lake monster	Loch Ness, Scotland	Sculpture of the Loch Ness monster as a plesiosaurus
Loveland Frog[25]	Loveland frogman, Loveland lizard	Humanoid frog	Loveland, Ohio	
Manipogo[26]	Winnipogo	Lake monster	Lake Manitoba, Canada	
Megalodon (surviving populations)[27][28][29]	Otodus megalodon[a]	Giant prehistoric shark	Oceans	
Mokele-mbembe[30]		Dinosaur (lake, river and/or swamp monster)	Republic of the Congo	
Montauk Monster	Small bald beaked mammal		Montauk, Long Island, NY	
Morgawr[31]	Sea serpent		Falmouth Bay	
Ogopogo[13]	N'ha•a•itk, Naitaka	Lake monster	Lake Okanagan, Canada	
Oklahoma Octopus[32]		giant octopus	Lake Thunderbird, Oklahoma, USA	
Sea serpents[33]	Sea animals, dinosaurs		All bodies of water	
Selma[34]	Seljordsormen	Lake monster	Lake Seljord, Telemark, Norway	
Steller's sea ape[35]		Sea animal	Pacific Ocean	

Terrestrial

Name	Other names	Description	Purported location	Depiction
------	-------------	-------------	--------------------	-----------

British big cats[36]	Alien big cats (ABCs), phantom cats, mystery cats, English lions, Beast of Bodmin, Beast of Exmoor	Carnivorous mammal	Great Britain
Chupacabra[37]	Chupacabras (Spanish for goat-sucker)		Puerto Rico
(originally), South and Central America, Southern North America			
Dover Demon[38]	Dover, Massachusetts		
Fresno nightcrawler[39]	Long white legs with no torso		Fresno, California
Lizard Man of Scape Ore Swamp[40]	Lizard Man of Lee County	Bipedal	South Carolina, United States
Mapinguari[41]	Mapinguary	Giant Ground Sloth or primate	Amazons
Michigan Dogman[42]	Humanoid dog		Wexford County, Michigan
Moa (surviving original populations)[43][b] Dinornis robustus (South Island giant moa), Dinornis novaezelandiae (North Island giant moa), Anomalopteryx didiformis (Bush moa, little bush moa, or lesser moa) Medium to large flightless birds New Zealand			
Mongolian death worm[44]	Allghoi (or orghoi) khorkhoi	Worm-like animal	Gobi Desert (Asia)
Nandi bear[45]	Chemosit, Kerit, Koddoelo, Ngoelo, Ngoloko, Duba		Large carnivore Eastern Africa
Not-deer[46]	Not deer	White-tailed deer with unnatural characteristics	Appalachia
Queensland Tiger[47]	Yarri	Large feline	Queensland
Thylacine (surviving original populations)[48][49][c] Tasmanian tiger. Tasmanian wolf, Thylacinus cynocephalus Carnivorous marsupial Australia Papua New Guinea			

Hominid

See also: Wild man

Name	Other names	Description	Purported location	Depiction
Almas[13]	Abnauayu, almasty, albasty, bekk-bok, biabin-guli, golub-yavan, gul-biavan, auli-avan, kaptar, kra-dhun, ksy-giik, ksy-gyik, ochokochi, mirygydy, mulen, voita, wind-man, Zana	Non-human ape or hominid	Asia/Caucasus	
Amomongo[50]	Orang Mawas, Impakta	Ape or hominid	Negros Occidental, Philippines	
Bigfoot[51]	Sasquatch	Large and hairy ape-like creature	United States and Canada	
Bukit Timah Monkey Man[52]	BTM, BTMM	Forest-dwelling hominid or other primate	Singapore	
Chatawa Monster[53][54]		Large ape-like creature	Mississippi, United States	
Chuchunya[55]		Large hominid	Russia	
Fouke Monster[56][57]	Jonesville Monster, Southern Sasquatch, Boggy Creek Monster	Hominid or other primate	Arkansas, United States	
Honey Island Swamp monster[58]	Letiche, Tainted Keitre	Hominid or other primate		

Louisiana, United States			
Orang Pendek	Small hominid	Sumatra	
Nittaewo[59]	Nittevo	Small hominids	Sri Lanka
Skunk ape[60]	Stink Ape, Myakka Ape, Myakka Skunk Ape	Primate	
Florida, United States			
Yeren[61][60]	Yiren, Yeh Ren, Chinese Wildman	Primate (possible hominin)	China
Yeti[62]	Abominable Snowman	Large and hairy human-like entity, various other descriptions	Himalayas (Asia)
Yowie[59]	Large and hairy human-like entity, various other descriptions		
Australia			

Flying	
Name	Other names Description Purported location Depiction
Jersey Devil[24]	Leeds Devil Winged bipedal horse United States, mainly the South Jersey Pine Barrens, as well as other parts of New Jersey and southeastern Pennsylvania
Mothman[63]	Winged Man, Bird Man, UFO-Bird, Mason Bird Monster Winged bipedal Mason County, West Virginia, United States
See also	

Animalia Paradoxa
 Fearsome critters
 Legendary creature
 List of cryptozoologists
 Lists of legendary creatures
 List of megafauna discovered in modern times
 List of urban legends
 Rare species
 Notes

Otodus is the currently accepted genus name for megalodon. Older sources refer to the genus as Carcharodon, Carcharocles, and several other names.

There is an ongoing de-extinction project to revive the bush moa through genome editing, this entry refers to the possibility of surviving original populations

There is an ongoing de-extinction project to revive the species through genome editing, this entry refers to the unconfirmed sightings and reports of surviving original populations

References

Mullis (2021: 185): "Eschewing the rigors of science, cryptozoologists publish for a popular audience rather than for experts resulting in the practice itself frequently being derided as a pseudoscience."

Loxton & Prothero (2013: 332): "Whatever the romantic appeal of monster mysteries, cryptozoology as it exists today is unquestionably a pseudoscience." Loxton & Prothero (2013: 320): "Cryptozoology has a reputation of being part of a general pseudoscientific fringe—just one more facet of paranormal belief." (Both quotes from Donald Prothero)

Church (2009: 251–252): "Cryptozoology has acquired a bad reputation as a pseudoscience [...] Until detailed, methodical research becomes standard practice among cryptozoologists, the field will remain disrespected by more traditional biologists

and zoologists."

Roesch & Moore (2002: 71–78): "Pointing to this rampant speculation and ignorance of established scientific theories in cryptozoology, as well as the field's poor record of success and its reliance on unsystematic, anecdotal evidence, many scientists and skeptics classify cryptozoology as a pseudoscience."

Shermer, Michael (2 May 2003). "Show Me the Body". *Scientific American*. Retrieved 8 January 2025.

Dash, Mike (2000). *Borderlands*. The Overlook Press. ISBN 978-0-87951-724-3.

Simpson, George Gaylord (1984). "Mammals and Cryptozoology". *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. Vol. 128, No. 1 (Mar. 30, 1984), pp. 1–19. American Philosophical Society.

Cassella, Carly (31 January 2023). "Bigfoot Has a Very Simple Explanation, Scientist Says". *ScienceAlert*. Retrieved 7 January 2025.

Loxton & Prothero (2013: 31-32)

"El misterioso viaje de las anguilas desde el Triángulo de las Bermudas a los barrancos canarios". *ABC*. Archived from the original on 11 December 2024. Retrieved 12 December 2024.

Bunyip. (2018). *Funk & Wagnalls New World Encyclopedia*, 1;

Loxton & Prothero 2013, pp. 261–295.

Shermer, Michael; Linse, Pat (November 2002). *The Skeptic Encyclopedia of Pseudoscience*. Vol. 1. ABC-CLIO. p. 72. ISBN 9781576076538.

Mörzer Bruyns, W. F. J. (1971). *Field guide of whales and dolphins*. Rivonverhandeling. Tor. pp. 124–125. ISBN 978-90-70055-09-7

"Cetaceans with two dorsal fins" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 13 April 2023. Retrieved 7 January 2023.

"Ireland's hound of deep - Dobhar Chu". *Irish Central News*. Retrieved 19 December 2018.

Nicaise, Alexander (5 September 2019). "Gloucester Sea-Serpent Mystery: Solved after Two Centuries | Skeptical Inquirer". Retrieved 25 September 2023.

Fuller, Errol (1999). *The Great Auk*. Southborough, Kent, UK: Privately Published. ISBN 0-9533553-0-6 pp. 404-413

Gilmore, David D. (2003). *Monsters : evil beings, mythical beasts, and all manner of imaginary terrors*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 978-0-8122-0322-6. OCLC 802059457.

"Welcome to Ogoopogo Country - Canada's Lake Creature". *epe.lac-bac.gc.ca*. Retrieved 22 October 2024.

Lallanilla, Marc (4 February 2013). "Reports Surface of Monster Lurking in Russian Lake". *livescience.com*. Live Science. Archived from the original on 29 September 2021. Retrieved 21 March 2022.

"Divers preparing for icy waters of Russia's 'Loch Ness'". *siberiantimes.com*. The Siberian Times. 5 March 2014. Archived from the original on 28 January 2021. Retrieved 21 March 2022.

"Meet the creature found by divers in Russia's Loch Ness, famed for legends of monsters". *siberiantimes.com*. The Siberian Times. 21 April 2014. Archived from the original on 8 November 2021. Retrieved 21 March 2022.

Velasquez, S.J. (31 October 2015). "The monster you should never find". BBC Online. British Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved 11 August 2018.

Haupt, R. (30 June 2015). "Skeptoid #473: The Loveland Frog". Skeptoid. Retrieved 1 September 2021.

Bernhardt, Darren. "Keep your camera handy: Stories of Manitoba lake monsters told for centuries but proof remains elusive". Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Retrieved 29 June 2024.

Guimont, Edward (5 October 2021). "The Megalodon: A Monster of the New Mythology". *M/C Journal*. 24 (5). doi:10.5204/mcj.2793. ISSN 1441-2616. S2CID 241813307.

Rouner, Jef (8 August 2013). "Prominent Cryptozoologists Denounce 'Megalodon: The Monster Shark Lives'". Houston Press. Retrieved 31 October 2024.

Montgomery, Joy (7 June 2024). "How Megalodon Worked". How Stuff Works. Retrieved 31 October 2024. Most scientists, paleontologists and other experts believe from the fossil evidence that megalodon became extinct over 2 million years ago during the Plio-Pleistocene period, but some cryptozoologists and researchers think that this giant shark may still exist in the undiscovered depths of the ocean... Proponents of the theory of megalodon's continued existence often point to eyewitness accounts to debate the possibility of the species' survival. Occasionally, a report will surface about a large, unidentified shark in the ocean, but those accounts have been mostly discounted as tall tales. Some researchers say that the discovery of new, unfossilized teeth proves that megalodon lives, but zoologist and cryptozoology expert Ben Speers-Roesch explains that these reports are erroneous and ignore the fact that no truly unfossilized teeth have ever belonged to megalodon.

Loxton & Prothero 2013, pp. 187–188.

James, R. M. (2022). *MORGAWR AND THE FOLKLORESQUE: (A study of a whopping fish tale)*. *Shima*, 16(2), 160–172. <https://doi.org/10.21463/shima.123>

"Is there an Oklahoma Octopus?". KGOU - Oklahoma's NPR Source. Retrieved 30 November 2025.

Loxton & Prothero 2013, pp. 228–326.

Botsford, Flora (31 August 1999). "Secret life of the Norwegian Nessie". *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-3077. Retrieved 30 June 2024.

Nickell, Joe (Winter 2016–2017). "Steller's Sea Ape: Identifying an Eighteenth-Century Cryptid". *Skeptical Briefs*. Vol. 26, no. 4. Committee for Skeptical Inquiry.

"Fantastic Cryptids And Where To Find Them". *Forbes*. Retrieved 18 December 2018.

Regal, Brian (15 October 2009). *Pseudoscience: A Critical Encyclopedia: A Critical Encyclopedia*. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 978-0-313-35508-0.

Sullivan, Mark (29 October 2006). "Decades later, the Dover Demon still haunts". *The Boston Globe*. Retrieved 6 August 2021.

"Bigfoot, Chupacabra, and ... Fresno Nightcrawler? Walking pants bring Fresno freaky fame". *The Fresno Bee*. Retrieved 5 April 2025.

Laycock, Joseph P. (11 July 2018). "A Search for Mysteries and Monsters in Small Town America". *Smithsonian Magazine*. Retrieved 18 March 2021.

"Twilight of the mammoths: Ice Age extinctions and the rewilding of America". *Choice Reviews Online*. 43 (8): 43–4679-43-4679. 1 April 2006. doi:10.5860/choice.43-4679

(inactive 1 July 2025). ISSN 0009-4978.

Hudson, Alison (28 July 2015). "Skeptoid #477: Wag the Dogman". Skeptoid. Retrieved 22 June 2017.

Foxon, Floe (30 December 2024). "Fringe Zoology: The (In)Convenience of Disappearing Evidence | Skeptical Inquirer". Retrieved 1 January 2025.

Benjamin Radford (21 June 2014). "Mongolian Death Worm: Elusive Legend of the Gobi Desert". livescience.com. Retrieved 22 October 2023.

Simpson, George Gaylord (1984). "Mammals and Cryptozoology". *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*. 128 (1): 1–19. ISSN 0003-049X. JSTOR 986487.

Sword, Autumn (10 September 2021). "Not Deer, or a Deer? | Skeptical Inquirer". Retrieved 14 February 2025.

Smith, Malcolm (1996). *Bunyips & bigfoots : in search of Australia's mystery animals*. Alexandria, NSW: Millennium Books. ISBN 1-86429-081-1. OCLC 36719441.

Nickell, J., & RANDI, J. (2004). Cryptids "Down Under." In *The Mystery Chronicles: More Real-Life X-Files* (pp. 289–295). University Press of Kentucky. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt2tv62q.39>

Crane, K. (2012). *Myths of wilderness in contemporary narratives : Environmental postcolonialism in australia and canada*. (pp.145) Palgrave Macmillan

"'Amomongo' frightens villagers in Negros". ABS-CBN News. Archived from the original on 27 February 2017.

Loxton & Prothero 2013, pp. 29–70.

"On the hunt for the elusive Bukit Timah Monkey Man". Channel NewsAsia. Archived from the original on 30 October 2018. Retrieved 18 December 2018.

"Chatawa—Indians weren't kidding about the sparkling water". *Enterprise-Journal*. 18 September 1985. p. 19. Retrieved 12 October 2024 – via Newspapers.com. Open access icon

Grayson, Walt (17 July 2020). "Focused on Mississippi: Chatawa Monster". WJTV. Retrieved 12 October 2024.

O'Carroll, Eoin (28 September 2018). "Bigfoot and beyond: Why tales of wild men endure". *The Christian Science Monitor*. Retrieved 11 December 2018.

Dunning, B. (4 March 2014). "Skeptoid #404: The Boggy Creek Monster". Skeptoid. Retrieved 1 September 2021.

Thibodeau, Sunni (24 June 2001). "The Fouke Monster 30 Years Later: Ex-journalists recall sifting fact from Fouke fiction after sighting". *Texarkana Gazette*. Archived from the original on 3 August 2003. Retrieved 31 October 2024.

Frances, Leary (December 2003). "The Honey Island Swamp Monster: The Development and Maintenance of Folk and Commodified Belief Tradition" (PDF). pp. 4–6. Retrieved 18 March 2021.

Lack, Caleb W.; Rousseau, Jacques (8 March 2016). *Critical Thinking, Science, and Pseudoscience: Why We Can't Trust Our Brains*. Springer Publishing Company. p. 154. ISBN 978-0-8261-9426-8.

Lack, Caleb W.; Rousseau, Jacques (8 March 2016). *Critical Thinking, Science, and Pseudoscience: Why We Can't Trust Our Brains*. Springer Publishing Company. p. 170. ISBN 978-0-8261-9426-8.

"It's the monstrous new trend sweeping travel – what is cryptid-tourism?". Irish

Examiner. Archived from the original on 4 October 2018. Retrieved 13 December 2018.
Loxton & Prothero 2013, p. 73.

Kantrowitz, Lia; Fitzmaurice, Larry; Terry, Josh (16 January 2018). "People Keep Seeing the Mothman in Chicago". Vice. Retrieved 26 April 2019.

Sources

Loxton, Daniel; Prothero, Donald R. (2013). Abominable Science: Origins of the Yeti, Nessie, and other Famous Cryptids. Columbia University Press. ISBN 978-0-231-52681-4.

External links

Wikibooks has a book on the topic of: Cryptids

Media related to Cryptozoology at Wikimedia Commons

The dictionary definition of cryptid at Wiktionary

vte

Cryptozoology

vte

Urban legends

Categories: CryptidsLists of legendary creatures

This page was last edited on 8 December 2025, at 02:49 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Nāga

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For the modern ethnic group, see Naga people. For other uses, see Naga (disambiguation).

Nāga

A nāga couple, featured as a Chennakeshava Temple relief

Devanagari नाग

Venerated in Hinduism, Buddhism

Abode Patala

Texts Mahabharata, Puranas

In various Asian religious traditions, the Nāgas (Sanskrit: नाग, romanized: Nāga)[1] are a divine, or semi-divine, race of half-human, half-serpent beings that reside in the netherworld (Patala), and can occasionally take human or part-human form, or are so depicted in art. Furthermore, nāgas are also known as dragons and water spirits. A female nāga is called a Nagini (Hindi: Nagin). According to legend, they are the children of the sage Kashyapa and Kadru. Rituals devoted to these supernatural beings have been taking place throughout South Asia for at least 2,000 years.[2] They are principally depicted in three forms: as entirely human with snakes on the heads and necks, as common serpents, or as half-human, half-snake beings in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Nagaraja is the title given to the king of the nāgas.[3] Narratives of these beings hold cultural significance in the mythological traditions of many South Asian and Southeast Asian cultures, and within Hinduism and Buddhism. Communities such as the Nagavamshi, Khmer and Sri Lankan Tamils claim descent from this race.

Etymology

Wikispecies has information related to *Naja naja*.

In Sanskrit, a nāgá (नाग) is a snake, most often depicted by the Indian cobra (*Naja naja*). A synonym for nāgá is phaṇin (फणिन्). There are several words for "snake" in general, and one of the very commonly used ones is sarpá (सर्प). Sometimes the word nāgá is also used generically to mean "snake".[4] The word is cognate with English 'snake', Germanic: *snēk-a-, Proto-IE: *(s)nēg-o- (with s-mobile).[5]

Alternatively, an Indo-European etymology as a "hairless, naked animal"—cognate to English "naked"—would explain that the Sanskrit word nāga can also mean "cloud", "mountain" or "elephant".[6]

Hinduism

Patanjali as Śeṣa.

Nāgas, as a serpent-shaped group of deities that often take form as cobras, are prominent in Hindu iconography, throughout Hindu texts (especially in the first book of the Mahābhārata) and in local folk traditions of worship.[7] In some regions of the Himalaya, nāgas are regarded as the divine rulers of the region — for example, in Kullu

Valley, in Berinag and in the valley of the Pindar River, which is believed to be ruled by the ninefold Naiṇī Devī. Both in the Nilamata Purana of Kashmir and in the Swayambhu Purana of Kathmandu, the respective region begins its history as a lake, populated by nāgas, which is later drained.[8]

Ancient Sanskrit texts such as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas describe the nāgas as a powerful, splendid and proud semi-divine species that can assume their physical form either as human (often with a halo of cobra hoods behind their head), as a partially human serpent, or as a whole serpent. Their domain is in the enchanted underworld, the underground realm filled with gems, gold and other earthly treasures called Naga-loka or Patala-loka. They are also often associated with bodies of waters—including rivers, lakes, seas, and wells—and are guardians of treasure.[9] Their power and venom make them potentially dangerous to humans. However, in Hindu mythology, they often take the role of benevolent protagonists: in the Samudra Manthana, Vasuki, a nagaraja who abides on Shiva's neck, became the churning rope for churning of the Ocean of Milk.[10] Their eternal archrival is the Garuḍa, the legendary semi-divine bird-like deity.[11]

Vishnu is originally portrayed in the form sheltered by Sheshanāga or reclining on Shesha, but the iconography has been extended to other deities as well. The serpent is a common feature in Ganesha iconography, and appears in many forms: around the neck,[12] use as a sacred thread (Sanskrit: yajñopavīta)[13] wrapped around the stomach as a belt, held in a hand, coiled at the ankles, or as a throne.[14] Shiva is often shown garlanded with a snake.[15] Maehle (2006: p. 297) states that "Patanjali is thought to be a manifestation of the serpent of eternity".

Part of a series on
Hinduism

HindusMythology

Origins

Sampradaya (traditions)

Deities

Concepts

Practices

Philosophical schools

Gurus, Rishi, philosophers

Texts

Hindu culture and society

Other topics

GlossaryOutline

Hinduism portal

vte

Folk traditions

In South India, termite hills are believed to be the dwelling place of female nagammas,

[16][17][18] whereas Himalayan Nags and Naginis, such as Naiṇī Devī of Pindar Valley, are worshipped as underworld beings protecting water resources and the wellbeing of village and valley.[19][20]

Literature

See also: Shesha, Vasuki, and Manasa

The Mahabharata epic is the first text that introduces nāgas; it describes them in detail and narrates their stories.[21] The cosmic snake Shesha, the nagarajas (nāga kings) Vasuki, Takshaka, Airavata and Karkotaka, and the princess Ulupi, are all depicted in the Mahabharata.

The Brahma Purana describes the reign of Adishesha as the king of the serpents in Patala:[22]

During the night the light of the moon is not utilised for its coolness but only for illumination.

Since that passes away is not taken notice of by the nāgas who enjoy with gaiety the foodstuffs and the edibles they consume and the great beverages they drink. Nor are Danujas and others aware of it.

O brahmins, the forests, rivers, lakes, and lotus ponds, the cooing of the cuckoo and other sweet birds, the pleasing skies, the unguents and the continuous notes and sounds of musical instruments such as the lute, flute and Mṛdaṅga drums, O brahmins—all these and other beautiful things are enjoyed by virtue of their good luck by Dānavas, Daityas and Nāgas residing in Pātāla. The Tāmasī form of Viṣṇu, named Śeṣa is beneath the lower regions.

Daityas and Dānavas are not capable of recounting his good qualities. He is honoured by Devas and celestial sages. He is spoken of as Ananta. He has a thousand hoods and he is clearly bedecked in Svastika ornaments devoid of impurities. He illuminates all quarters by thousand jewels on his hoods.

—Brahma Purana, Chapter 19

The Kamba Ramayana describes the role of Vasuki in the Samudra Manthana:[23]

The devas and the asuras decided to get Amṛta (Ambrosia—the celestial honey of immortality) by churning the sea of milk. The Devas went to bring Mandara-mountain, to be used as the churning rod. Their attempt was futile. The asuras made a trial with the same result. The Bhūtagaṇas (Guards) of Śiva also made a vain attempt. On the instruction of Viṣṇu, Garuḍa went and brought the mountain as easily as an eagle takes away a frog. Now Vāsuki should be brought. The Devas and Gandharvas failed in that attempt also. Garuḍa who was haughty of his strength and speed, went to the city of the nāgas (serpents) and requested Vāsuki to come to the sea of Milk. Vāsuki replied that if the matter was so urgent he had no objection for being carried to that place. He took the

middle part of Vāsuki in his beak and flew up higher and higher and reached beyond the horizon. Still the lower half of Vāsuki was lying on the ground. So he took Vāsuki in his beak as folded in two. Still the result was the same. Garuḍa became aware of the impossibility of carrying Vāsuki and returned, ashamed and disappointed. Viṣṇu rebuked him for his arrogance. After this, Śiva stretched his hand to Pātāla. Vāsuki became a small bangle on that hand. Thus Vāsuki was brought to the shore of the sea of Milk.

—Kambar, Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda

The Devi Bhagavata Purana describes the legend of Manasa:[24]

Manasā is the mind-born daughter of Maharṣi Kaśyapa; hence she is named Manasā; or it may be She who plays with the mind is Manasā. Or it may be She who meditates on God with her mind and gets rapture in Her meditation of God is named Manasā. She finds pleasure in Her Own Self, the great devotee of Viṣṇu, a Siddha Yoginī. For three Yugas She worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and then She became a Siddha Yoginī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Gopīs, seeing the body of Manasā lean and thin due to austerities, or seeing her worn out like the Muni Jarat Kāru called her by the name of Jarat Kāru. Hence Her name has come also to be Jarat Kāru. Kṛṣṇa, the Ocean of Mercy, gave her out of kindness, Her desired boon; She worshipped Him and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also worshipped Her. Devī Manasā is known in the Heavens, in the abode of the Nāgas (serpents), in earth, in Brahmāloka, in all the worlds as of very fair colour, beautiful and charming. She is named Jagad Gaurī as she is of a very fair colour in the world. Her other name is Śaivī and she is the disciple of Śiva. She is named Vaiṣṇavī as she is greatly devoted to Viṣṇu. She saved the Nāgas in the Snake Sacrifice performed by Parikṣit, she is named Nageśvarī and Nāga Bhaginī and She is capable to destroy the effects of poison. She is called Viṣahari. She got the Siddha yoga from Mahādeva; hence She is named Siddha Yoginī

—Devi Bhagavata Purana, Chapter 47

Buddhism

Mucalinda sheltering Gautama Buddha (Buddha in Naga Prok attitude) at Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

As in Hinduism, the Buddhist nāga generally has sometimes been portrayed as a human being with a snake or dragon extending over his head.[25] One nāga, in human form, attempted to become a monk, and when telling it that such ordination was impossible, the Buddha told it how to ensure that it would be reborn a human, and so able to become a monk.[26]

The nāgas are believed to both live on Nagaloka, among the other minor deities and in various parts of the human-inhabited earth. Some of them are water-dwellers, living in streams or the ocean; others are earth-dwellers, living in caverns.

The nāgas are the followers of Virūpākṣa (Pāli: Virūpakkha), one of the Four Heavenly

Kings who guards the western direction. They act as guards upon Mount Sumeru, protecting the dēvas of Trāyastriṃśa from attacks by the asuras.

Among the notable nāgas of Buddhist tradition is Mucalinda, nagaraja and protector of the Buddha. In the Vinaya Sutra (I, 3), shortly after his enlightenment, the Buddha is meditating in a forest when a great storm arises, but graciously, King Mucalinda gives shelter to the Buddha from the storm by covering the Buddha's head with his seven snake heads.[27] Then the king takes the form of a young Brahmin and renders the Buddha homage.[27]

In the Vajrayāna and Mahāsiddha traditions,[28] nāgas in their half-human form are depicted holding a nāgas-jewel, kumbhas of amrita, or a terma that had been elementally encoded by adepts. In Tibetan Buddhism, nāgas are known as klu or klu-mo and they are associated with water and cleanliness, as they live in oceans, rivers, lakes, and springs, and do not want their environments to be disturbed or polluted.[29]

The two chief disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Moggallāna are both referred to as Mahānāga or "Great nāga".[30] Some of the most important figures in Buddhist history symbolize nāgas in their names such as Dignāga, Nāgāsēna, and, although other etymons are assigned to his name, Nāgārjuna.

Literature

Nāga at the steps of a building in the Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok.
The Nāga Sāmyutta of the Pali Canon consists of suttas specifically devoted to explaining nature of the nāgas.

In the "Devadatta" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the daughter of the dragon king, an eight year old longnü (龍女, nāgakanyā), after listening to Mañjuśrī preach the Lotus Sutra, transforms into a male Bodhisattva and immediately reaches full enlightenment.[31][32] [33] Some say this tale appears to reinforce the viewpoint prevalent in Mahayana scriptures that a male body is required for Buddhahood, even if a being is so advanced in realization that they can magically transform their body at will and demonstrate the emptiness of the physical form itself.[34] However, many schools of Buddhism and classical, seminal Chinese exegeses interpret the story to repudiate this viewpoint, stating the story demonstrates that women can attain Buddhahood in their current form. [31]

According to tradition, the Prajñapāramita sutras had been given by the Buddha to a great nāga who guarded them in the sea, and were conferred upon Nāgārjuna later.[35] [36]

In Tibetan Buddhist literature, nāgas are portrayed as guardians or owners of submerged treasure, which can be mere wealth or supernatural, "spiritual" treasures.[29]

Other traditions

In Thailand and Java, the nāga is a wealthy underworld deity. For Malay sailors, nāgas are a type of dragon with many heads. In Laos they are beaked water serpents.[citation needed] In Tibet, they are said to be found in waterways and underground locations, and are susceptible to the suffering caused by human carelessness towards the natural environment.

Sri Lanka

A granite nagaraja guardstone from Sri Lanka.

The Naga people were believed to be an ancient tribe and origins of Sri Lanka.[37][38] [note 1] According to V. Kanakasabhai, the Oliyar, Parathavar, Maravar, and Eyinar, who were widespread across South India and North-East Sri Lanka, are all Naga tribes.[41] There are references to them in several ancient texts such as Mahavamsa, Manimekalai, and also in other Sanskrit and Pali literature. They are generally represented as a class of superhumans taking the form of serpents who inhabit a subterranean world. Texts such as Manimekalai represent them as persons in human form.[42][note 2]

Cambodia

Nāga statue front of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap province.
icon

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (November 2023) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

Cambodian seven-headed nāga at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

Stories of nāgas (Khmer: នាគ, néak) have been part of Khmer society for thousands of years, dating back to the Funan era (ស្រីវត្តិ). According to reports from two Chinese envoys, Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, the state of Funan was established in the 1st century CE when an Indian prince named Kaundinya I (កៅណ្ឌិន្យទី១) married a nāga princess named Soma (សោមាភូត្តន្ទ្រ saôma kon preah chan; "Soma, daughter of the moon god"; Chinese: 柳葉, 柳叶 Liuye; "Willow Leaf"). The couple is symbolized in the story of Preah Thong and Neang Neak. As the legend goes, Kaundinya received instruction in a dream to take a magic bow from a temple and defeat Soma, the nāga princess and daughter of the nāga king. During the ensuing battle, they fell in love and later married, establishing the royal lineage of the Funan dynasty. Kaundinya subsequently constructed the capital city of Vyadhapura, and the kingdom became known as Kambujadeśa or Cambodia (កម្ពុជា, Kampuchea).[43][44][45] The love story between Kaundinya and Soma is the foundation for many standard practices in modern-day Khmer culture, including wedding ceremonies and other rituals.[46][47] The Khmer people regard themselves as descendants of the nāgas and many still believe the nāga

exist today, destined to one day return and restore prosperity to their people.[citation needed]

Although wars, nature, and the passage of time destroyed many temples from the Funan era, nāgas can still be seen in ancient temples dating to the Chenla and Angkor eras. For instance, the temple now called "The Coiled Nāgas Temple" (បុរាណាគីវ័ន្ត, Prasat Neak Poan) was previously named, "Emperor's Wealth Temple" (បុរាណជ័យស្ន, Prasat Reach Srey).[48]

In Khmer culture, nāgas symbolize rain, and represent a bridge between the mortal realm (ឋានមនុស្ស) and the realm of devas (Heaven; ឋានទេវតា/ឋានសួគ៌). They have the ability to transform into half or fully human and act as protectors against invisible forces, deities, or malicious intentions. Furthermore, Cambodian nāgas possess numerological symbolism based on the number of their heads. Odd-headed nāgas embody masculinity, infinity, timelessness, and immortality, since all odd numbers derives from the number one (១). Even-headed nāgas denote femininity, physicality, mortality, temporality, and the Earth. Odd headed nāgas are believed to represent immortality and are carved and used throughout Cambodia.[49][50]

Odd-headed nāga
icon

This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (September 2024) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

1-headed nāga

Mostly seen in modern days, carved on objects for protection in temples, monasteries, king's places and residences of deity (អគីនេត). They symbolize that even if everything in this world is gone, there's still this nāga left bringing victory and happiness to all.

3-headed, Kalyak

Born between the mortal and divine realms, they live at the bottom of the ocean as guardians of wealth, often depicted as evil (nothing to do with the symbolism). They symbolize the Hindu Trimurti; (left Vishnu, middle Shiva, right Brahma) and the three realms - heaven (devas' realm), earth (mortal realm), and hell (norok realm). In Buddhism, the central head represents Buddha, the right Dharma and the left the monks.

5-headed Anontak/Sesak

Born from the earthly elements, they are immortals. They symbolize the 5 directions; East, West, North, South and Middle (Ganga river, Indus river, Yamuna river, Brahmaputra river (Brahma's Son River), Sarasvati river). In Buddhism, the 5 heads represent the 5 Buddhas - Kadabak, Kunsontho, Koneakumno, Samnak Koudom Gautama Buddha, and Seare Metrey.

7-headed Muchlentak

Originated from the Himalayas, they bring peace and prosperity to humans. They control the seven oceans and seven mountains called 'Seytontaraksatakboriphorn.' Sheltered

Gautama Buddha for 7 days and 7 nights (Mucalinda). Often depicted as guardian statues, carved as balustrades on causeways leading to main temples, such as those found in Angkor Wat.[50] They also represent the seven races within nāga society, which has a mythological, or symbolic, association with "the seven colors of the rainbow." They symbolize the Sun, the Moon and five other planets; ចន្ទ (Moon)[also Monday] អង្គារ (Mars)[Tuesday] ពុធ (Mercury)[Wednesday] ពុហស្បតិ៍ (Jupiter)[Thursday] សុក្រ (Venus)[Friday] សៅរ៍ (Saturn)[Saturday] អាទិត្យ (Sun)[Sunday].

9-headed Vasukak

The king who rules the Earth (Vasuki). When carved on both sides, the front heads represent reincarnation and behind represent death. He symbolizes the power of the nine immortals of the universe - power of the lightning and thunder of the East (ទិសបូព៌ា), power of the fire of the Southeast (ទិសអាគ្នេយ៍), power of the law and order of the South (ទិសខាងត្បូង), power of the spirits and demonic creatures of the Southwest (ទិសនាគី), power of the rain of the West (ទិសខាងលិច), power of the wind of the Northwest (ទិស ពាយ័ព្យ), power of the wealth and aesthetic of the North (ទិសឧត្តរ), power of destruction of the Northeast (ទិសអាគ្នេយ៍), power of Brahma (creation and preservation) in the middle (កណ្តាល).

In Indian origin religions, there are four different nāga races:

Primitive Dragons such as the European dragon who can spit fire.

The Spiritual Dragons who are the guardians of wealth, protecting treasure in the ocean. They can take on a half human form.

The Divine Nāgas, who can travel to heaven, came from Lord Indra's realm (the divine realm). They can take on a full human form.

The Supreme and Divine Nāgas, like Vasuki the follower of Lord Shiva, who alone can fight the entire Garuḍa race.

All of them have great powers and can set off storms, rain, tempest and create lands from the sea.

Indonesia

Crowned golden nāga-woodcarving at Keraton Yogyakarta, Java.

In Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese culture, Indonesia, a nāga is depicted as a crowned, giant, magical serpent, sometimes winged. It is similarly derived from the Shiva-Hinduism tradition, merged with Javanese animism. The nāga in Indonesia mainly derived and influenced by Indic tradition, combined with the native animism tradition of sacred serpents. In Sanskrit, the term nāga literally means snake, but in Java it normally refer to serpent deity, associated with water and fertility. In Borobudur, the nāgas are depicted in their human form, but elsewhere they are depicted in animal shape.[51]

Early depictions of circa-9th-century Central Java closely resembled Indic nāga which was based on imagery of cobras. During this period, nāga-serpents were depicted as giant cobras supporting the waterspout of yoni-lingam. The examples of nāga-sculpture

can be found in several Javanese candis, including Prambanan, Sambisari, Ijo, and Jawi. In East Java, the Penataran temple complex contain a Candi Nāga, an unusual nāga-temple with its Hindu-Javanese caryatids holding corpulent nāgas aloft.[52]

Crowned nāga flanked the stairs entrance of Pura Jagatkarta.

The later depiction since the 15th century, however, was slightly influenced by Chinese dragon imagery—although unlike its Chinese counterparts, Javanese and Balinese nāgas do not have legs. Nāga as the lesser deity of earth and water is prevalent in the Hindu period of Indonesia, before the introduction of Islam.

In Balinese tradition, nāgas are often depicted battling garuḍas. Intricately carved nāgas are found as stairs railings in bridges or stairs, such as those found in Balinese temples, Ubud monkey forest, and Taman Sari in Yogyakarta.

In a wayang theater story, a snake-like god (nāga) named Sanghyang Anantaboga or Antaboga is a guardian deity in the bowels of the earth.[53][54] nāgas symbolize the nether realm of earth or underworld.

Laos

Photograph, widely circulated in Laos, purporting to show American sailors in the Vietnam War, who caught a "Mekong Dragon" in Laos. In reality, the image shows a Russell's oarfish (*Regalecus russelii*) caught near San Diego, California in 1996. The Nāga (Lao: ພະຍານາກ) is believed to live in the Laotian stretch of the Mekong or its estuaries. Lao mythology maintains that the nāgas are the protectors of Vientiane, and by extension, the Lao state. The association with nāgas was most clearly articulated during and immediately after the reign of Anouvong. An important poem from this period San Leupphasun (Lao: ສານລືພສູນ) discusses relations between Laos and Thailand in a veiled manner, using the Nāga and the Garuḍa to represent the Lao and the Thai, respectively.[55] The Nāga is incorporated extensively into Lao iconography, and features prominently in Lao culture throughout the length of the country, not only in Vientiane.

Thailand

Phaya Nak or Phaya Nāga (Thai: พญานาค; RTGS: phaya nak; lit. 'lord of Nāga', phaya derived from Mon which mean high nobility) or Nakkharat (Thai: นาคราช; lit. 'king of Nāga') in Thai beliefs, nāgas are considered the patrons of water. Nāgas are believed to live in either water bodies or in caves. According to a popular legend, the Mekong River in north-eastern Thailand and Laos was said to be created by two Nāga kings slithering through the area, thus creating the Mekong and the nearby Nan River. The Mekong is synonymous with the unexplained fireballs phenomenon which has long been believed to be created by the nāgas that dwell in the river.[56][57] Common explanations of their sightings have been attributed to oarfish, elongated fish with red crests; however, these

are exclusively marine and usually live at great depths.[58]

In November 2022, the Thai government declared the nāga as the national symbol of Thailand, with the aim of promoting Thai culture and traditions and increasing the country's cultural capital to drive the creative economy. The nāga is a mythical creature with long-standing beliefs and connections to the Thai people, and its designation as a national symbol is a significant step towards preserving and promoting Thai culture. The National Culture Commission and the Fine Arts Department developed a prototype image of the nāga that accurately represents Thai beliefs and traditions related to the creature. The prototype image features the four families of nāgas, each with its unique color, and the largest nāga, Nak Vasuki (Thai: นาควาสุกรี), who is related to Buddhism and the Thai monarchy. The nāga is also believed to be a symbol of water and fertility and serves as a guardian of Buddhism.[59][60][61]

Due to the strong relation with everything water, the Nāga in Thai belief also plays a role in rain control. The concept of Nak hai nam (Thai: นาคให้น้ำ; lit. Nāga granting water) is used for annual rainfall prediction. It is still practiced nowadays, most notably during the Royal Ploughing Ceremony. The oracle ranges from 1 nak hai nam (1 Nāga granted water); meaning that abundant rainfall should be observed that year, to maximum 7 nak hai nam (7 nāgas granted water); meaning there might not be adequate rainfall that year.[62]

In northern Thailand, the Singhanavati Kingdom had a strong connection with nāgas. The kingdom was believed to be built with aids of nāgas, and thus, nāgas were highly revered by the royal family. The kingdom, for a period of time, was renamed Yonok Nāga Rāj (lit. Yonok the nagaraja)[63]

The nāgas are also highly revered. The Buddhist temples and palaces are often adorned with various nāgas. The term Nāga is also present in various Thai architecture terms including the nak sadung (นาคสะดุ้ง, the outer roof finial component featuring Nāga-like structure), and the nak than (นาคทับ, the corbel with Nāga-shape).[64]

Moreover, nāgas are sometimes linked to medicine. The nāga Vasuki is present in the legend of the Samudra Manthana, in which Dhanvantari (god of Ayurveda) and amrita (the elixir of eternal life) were churned from the Ocean of Milk. The nāgas can also be founded substituting the snakes in either Rod of Asclepius or mistakenly Caduceus of several medical institutions' symbols. The former seal of Faculty of Medicine, Srinakharinwirot University, and the seal of Society of Medical Student Thailand are some notable examples using the Caduceus with nāgas' presence instead of snakes. [65]

Folklore

Thai folklore holds the Phaya nāgas to be demi-god creatures, which possess supernatural powers as has been described in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology.[66] The "Kamchanod Forest" (ป่าคำชะโนด; RTGS: Pa Khamchanot) Ban Dung district, Udon Thani

province, which is held in high reverence and fear across Thailand, is believed to be the crossroads between the human world and the netherworld, and is frequently depicted in Thai folklore as the site of many hauntings, but more frequently is considered to be the home of the nāga.[67]

According to Shan folklore of Nánzhào Kingdom (now southern China and Southeast Asia during the 8th and 9th centuries, which was centered on present-day Yúnnán in China), the nāga inhabited the Ěrhǎi lake and is the creator of the Mekong.[66] In China, the nāga (Chinese: 那伽) is generally more considered to be a dragon.

Appearance

Many people, particularly in Isan (the north-eastern region of Thailand), believe that the nāgas are responsible for unnatural wave phenomena occurring in the rivers or lakes in the vicinity. It is also frequently claimed that the serpent-like demigods are responsible for marks on common objects, such as car hoods or house walls.[57]

A police officer has also claimed to be in contact with the nāga, although the implications of this contact is not thoroughly explained.[68]

In attempts to explain these phenomena, scientists and researchers at the Faculty of Science of Chulalongkorn University have attributed these seemingly preternatural phenomena to standing waves in water, and posit that the existence of the Phaya Nāga is similar to belief in Loch Ness Monster in Scotland or Ogopogo in Canada, and further maintain that the serpent-like tracks of the Phaya Nāga are very possibly forged by humans.[69]

Head of Nāga sculpture in Songkhla Province.

Head of Nāga sculpture in Songkhla Province.

A sign featuring Nāgas by the Mekong River, Nong Khai Province, Thailand: Nāgas and the Mekong are strongly associated in local beliefs.

A sign featuring Nāgas by the Mekong River, Nong Khai Province, Thailand: Nāgas and the Mekong are strongly associated in local beliefs.

Illustration of Royal Barge Anantanakkharat, 1873.

Illustration of Royal Barge Anantanakkharat, 1873.

Royal Barge Anantanakkharat at National Museum of Royal Barges, Bangkok.

Royal Barge Anantanakkharat at National Museum of Royal Barges, Bangkok.

Nāga sculpture at Suvarnabhumi airport.

Nāga sculpture at Suvarnabhumi airport.

Nāga, Himmapan animal on Royal Crematorium King Rama IX.

Nāga, Himmapan animal on Royal Crematorium King Rama IX.

Garuḍa devouring Nāga, at Wat Phra Kaew.

Garuḍa devouring Nāga, at Wat Phra Kaew.

Malaysia

Further information: Lake Chini

In Malay and Orang Asli traditions, the lake Chini, located in Pahang is home to a nāga called Sri Gumum. Depending on legend versions, her predecessor Sri Pahang or her son left the lake and later fought a nāga called Sri Kemboja. Kemboja is the Malay name for Cambodia. Like the nāga-legends there, there are stories about an ancient empire in lake Chini, although the stories are not linked to the nāga-legends.[70][71]

Philippines

Main article: Bakunawa

Bakunawa hilt from a Visayan (Panay) tenegre sword.

The indigenous Bakunawa, a serpent-like moon-eating creature in Philippine mythology, was syncretized with the nāga. It is believed to be the cause of eclipses, earthquakes, rains, and wind.[72] The movements of the bakunawa served as a geomantic calendar system for ancient Filipinos and were part of the shamanistic rituals of the babaylan. It is usually depicted with a characteristically looped tail and was variously believed to inhabit either the sea, the sky, or the underworld.[73] However, the bakunawa may have also syncretized with the Hindu deities, Rahu and Ketu, the navagraha of eclipses.[74]

Examples

Shesha, on whom Vishnu is in yoga nidra (Anantashayana)[75]

Antaboga, the world serpent in Javanese and Balinese mythology of Indonesia, who created the World Turtle Bedawang, on whose back the world resides

Apalala, Nāga in Buddhist mythology

Bakunawa, a dragon in Philippine mythology that is often represented as a gigantic sea serpent. Nāgas are also present in Kapampangan polytheistic beliefs, such as Lakandanum. (See Deities of Philippine mythology.)

Kaliya, a snake conquered by Krishna

Karkotaka, a nāga king in Indian mythology who controls weather, that lived in a forest near Nishadha Kingdom and stung Nala at the request of Indra

Paravataksha, his sword causes earthquakes and his roar caused thunder.

Manasa, the Hindu goddess of nāgas and curer of snake-bite and sister of Vasuki

Mucalinda, a nāga in Buddhism who protected the Gautama Buddha from the elements after his enlightenment

Naga Seri Gumum, who lives in Tasik Chini, a freshwater lake in Pahang, Malaysia

Padmavati, the Nāgī queen & companion of Dharanendra

Shwe Nabay (Naga Medaw), a goddess or a Nat spirit in Burmese animistic mythology, who is believed to have married a nāga and died from heartbreak after he left her

Takshaka, the king of the nāgas, and ruler of Khandava forest

Ulupi, a wife of Arjuna in the epic Mahabharata

Vasuki, the king of nāgas and who coils over Shiva's neck[76] and offered to serve as

the rope to pull Mount Mandara in the Samudra Manthana (Churning of the Ocean of Milk) to release the amrita (nectar of the immortality).

Yulong, the Dragon King of the West Sea in the Chinese classical novel Journey to the West, becomes a nāga after completing his journey with Xuanzang

In popular culture

This article may contain irrelevant references to popular culture. Please help improve it by removing such content and adding citations to reliable, independent sources.

(September 2024)

Film and television

A 4-headed Naga symbol and characters were part of the Leviathan story arc in the 1969 season of the gothic television soap opera Dark Shadows.

Several Bollywood films have been made about female nāgas, including Nagin (1954), Nagin (1976), Nagina (1986), Nigahen (1989), Jaani Dushman: Ek Anokhi Kahani (2002), and Hisss (2010). Nāga also appear in television series such as Naaginn (2007-2009), Naagin (2015) and Adhuri Kahaani Hamari (2015-2016).

In the 1998 film Jungle Boy, the Naga is depicted as a large cobra deity that grants the gift of understanding all languages to those who are pure of heart and punishes those who are not pure of heart in different ways.

In the 1999 Telugu film Devi, a Nagini played by Prema comes to Earth to protect a woman who saves her when she was in the snake form. She eventually falls in love with a human.

The Nagas are antagonists in the cartoon The Secret Saturdays. They served the ancient Sumerian cryptid Kur and attempted to push Zak Saturday into the dark side after learning that he was Kur reincarnated, but eventually served V. V. Argost when he gained his own Kur powers.

Many lakorn (Thai television soap operas) are based on a Phaya Naga legend, such as Poot Mae Nam Khong (ภูติแม่น้ำโขง) in 2008,[77] Manisawat (มนิสาวัต) in 2013,[78] or Nakee (นาคี) in 2016.[79]

A search for the Phaya Naga was featured in a Destination Truth episode on the SyFy (formerly Sci-Fi Channel) series in Series 01 (episode 02).[80]

The dragons in the 2021 film Raya and the Last Dragon are based on the Phaya Naga. A serpent god named Nāga is featured in the 2021 animated film Batman: Soul of the Dragon.

They are featured Pakistani movies like Naag aur Nagin (2005)

Literature

Nāga are featured in The Silent Bells, the fourth book in N. D. Wilson's Ashtown Burials series.

The Japanese anime and manga series, Slayers (1989), has a principal character named Naga the Serpent (introduced in 1990).

In J. K. Rowling's Wizarding World, Nagini is one of Voldemort's horcruxes in the Harry Potter series and a Maledictus, a carrier of blood curse, in the 2018 film Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindewald. Her curse allows her to change into a snake and back into a human, but her snake form eventually becomes permanent.

In the Xanth series by Piers Anthony, the Naga are a race of human-headed serpents that can transform between fully human and serpent forms, including any species and size of snake.

In The God in the Bowl, one of the original Conan the Barbarian stories by Robert E. Howard, the titular God is possibly a Nāga-like creature.

Games

“Naga” is name of a T1 battle cruiser in EVE Online . Shown as a long, thin hull, and used for long range attacks.

Nagas appear in the Dungeons & Dragons roleplaying game, depicted as massive serpents with human heads.

The Nagas appear in the multiple franchises by Blizzard Entertainment. In Warcraft, they are depicted as ancient night elves that have snake-like tails in place of legs, and have other serpentine or aquatic features such as scales and fins. The Nagas came to be when they were transformed from the ancient night elves by the Old Gods. Their queen Azshara is described as a demigoddess. The digital card game Hearthstone incorporated Naga as a minion type in its Battlegrounds game mode on May 10, 2022.

[81]

Nagas also appear in The Battle for Wesnoth, and are depicted as a more snakelike counterpart to the merfolk, who are often their enemies.

Magic: The Gathering's 2014–2015 block, set on the plane of Tarkir, featured Naga as humanoid snakes versed in powerful venoms and poisons with two arms and no other appendages. They are aligned with the Sultai clan in the sets, Khans of Tarkir[82] and Fate Reforged,[83] and with the Silumgar clan in the Dragons of Tarkir[84] set.

Nagas are units in Heroes of Might and Magic III.

Gigabash features Rawa, a bipedal Phaya Naga inspired kaiju among its playable cast of creatures.

Gallery

Nāga and Nagini in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Nāga and Nagini in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Nāga on copper pillar in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh India

Nāga on copper pillar in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh India

Nāga king in Anjali mudra in Deogarh temple, Madhya Pradesh

Nāga king in Anjali mudra in Deogarh temple, Madhya Pradesh

Maninaga and Svastika. Kushan period, 2nd century CE, Rajgir, Bihar

Maninaga and Svastika. Kushan period, 2nd century CE, Rajgir, Bihar

Nāga (marked 15) in the Varaha panel at Udayagiri Caves

Nāga (marked 15) in the Varaha panel at Udayagiri Caves

Tirthankara Parshvanatha of Jainism standing under Nāga hood

Tirthankara Parshvanatha of Jainism standing under Nāga hood

Nāga supporting waterspout of Yoni-Lingam, Yogyakarta Java, c. 9th century
Nāga supporting waterspout of Yoni-Lingam, Yogyakarta Java, c. 9th century

Nāga temple, Penataran, East Java
Nāga temple, Penataran, East Java

Nāga bridge at Ubud monkey forest, Bali
Nāga bridge at Ubud monkey forest, Bali

Nāga guarding Anouvong's Wat Sisaket in Vientiane
Nāga guarding Anouvong's Wat Sisaket in Vientiane

Sesa Nāga at Bangkok international airport, Thailand
Sesa Nāga at Bangkok international airport, Thailand

Nāga at the funeral of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in 2017
Nāga at the funeral of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in 2017

See also

Ichchadhari naag and naagin (shape-shifting cobra)

Lamia

List of Nāgas

Mahoraga

Naga Kingdom

Naga people (Lanka)

Nagarjuna

Nagvanshi

Naga Viper pepper

Phra Lak Phra Lam

Rocket Festival

Serpent (symbolism)

Snake worship

Vritra

Explanatory notes

Kathiragesu Indrapala writes that "In the traditions preserved in the early Sri Lankan chronicles as well as in the early Tamil literary works the Nagas appear as a distinct group".[39] He further writes that "the adoption of the Tamil language was helping the Nagas in the Tamil chiefdoms to be assimilated into the major ethnic group there".[40]

In the Mahavamsa as indeed in the ancient Sanskrit and Pali literature in general, the nāgas are never represented as human beings, but as a class of superhuman beings, who inhabited a subterranean world.

References

"Lord Shiva". Sanskrit Dictionary. Archived from the original on 24 February 2021.

Retrieved 27 September 2018.

"Nāgas". Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online. doi:10.1163/2212-5019_beh_com_000337.

Elgood, Heather (2000). *Hinduism and the Religious Arts*. London: Cassell. p. 234. ISBN 0-304-70739-2.

Apte, Vaman Shivram (1997). *The student's English-Sanskrit dictionary* (3rd rev. & enl. ed.). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 81-208-0299-3., p. 423. The first definition of *nāgaḥ* given reads "A snake in general, particularly the cobra." p.539

Proto-IE: *(s)nēg-o-, Meaning: snake, Old Indian: *nāgá-* m. 'snake', Germanic: **snēk-a-* m., **snak-an-* m., **snak-ō* f.; **snak-a-* vb.: "Indo-European etymology". Archived from the original on 21 January 2019. Retrieved 9 August 2010.

Mayrhofer, Manfred (1996). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. Vol. 2. Heidelberg: Winter., p. 33.

Lange, Gerrit (2019). "Cobra Deities and Divine Cobras: The Ambiguous Animality of *Nāgas*". *Religions*. 10 (8): 454. doi:10.3390/rel10080454.

Deeg, Max (2016). *Miscellanae Nepalica. The Foundation Legend of Nepal in Its Trans-Himalayan Context*. Lumbini: LIRI.

"Naga | Hindu mythology". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 4 September 2022. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

"Why was *vasuki* used in *Samudra Manthan* great ocean Churning". *Hinduism Stack Exchange*. Archived from the original on 11 May 2018. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

"*Garuḍa* | Hindu mythology". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 11 May 2018. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

For the story of wrapping *Vāsuki* around the neck and *Śeṣa* around the belly and for the name in his *sahasranama* as *Sarpagraiveyakāṅgādaḥ* ("Who has a serpent around his neck"), which refers to this standard iconographic element, see: Krishan, Yuvraj (1999), *Gaṇeśa: Unravelling An Enigma*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, ISBN 81-208-1413-4, pp=51-52.

For text of a stone inscription dated 1470 identifying *Ganesha*'s sacred thread as the serpent *Śeṣa*, see: Martin-Dubost, p. 202.

For an overview of snake images in *Ganesha* iconography, see: Martin-Dubost, Paul (1997). *Gaṇeśa: The Enchanter of the Three Worlds*. Mumbai: Project for Indian Cultural Studies. ISBN 81-900184-3-4, p. 202.

Flood, Gavin (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-43878-0.; p. 151

König, Ditte (1984). *Das Tor zur Unterwelt. Mythologie und Kult des Termitenhügels in der schriftlichen und mündlichen Tradition Indiens*. Heidelberg: Franz Steiner.

Alloco, Amy (2013). *Fear, Reverence and Ambivalence. Divine Snakes in Contemporary South India*. *Religions of South Asia* 7: 230–48.

Alloco, Amy. 2014. *Snakes in the Dark Age. Human Action, Karmic Retribution, and the Possibilities for Hindu Animal Ethics*. In *Asian Perspectives on Animal Ethics. Rethinking the Nonhuman*. Edited by Neil Dalal and Chloë Taylor. London and New York: Routledge.

Lange, Gerrit (2017). "Western Himalayan *Nāgs* as Guardians of Water Resources". *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture*. 11 (3): 361–378. doi:10.1558/jsrnc.33600.

Lange, Gerrit (2024). "Chapter 7: Creating a Landscape through Myths. The Journey of *Naiṇī* or *Nāginā Devī*, a Nine-fold Western Himalayan Hindu Goddess". In Hegewald,

Julia; Gymnich, Marion (eds.). *Images and Stories of the Origin(s) of the World and Humankind*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. pp. 178–204. ISBN 978-3-16-162737-8.

Lange, Gerrit (26 July 2019). "Cobra Deities and Divine Cobras: The Ambiguous Animality of Nāgas". *Religions*. 10 (8): 454. doi:10.3390/rel10080454. ISSN 2077-1444. www.wisdomlib.org (17 March 2018). "The Magnitude of Netherworlds [Chapter 19]". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

www.wisdomlib.org (28 January 2019). "Story of Vāsuki". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

www.wisdomlib.org (15 May 2013). "On Manasā's story [Chapter 47]". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

Forbes, Andrew; Henley, Daniel; Ingersoll, Ernest; Henley, David. "Indian Nagas and Draconic Prototypes". *The Illustrated Book of Dragons and Dragon Lore*. Cognoscenti Books. ASIN B00D959PJ0.

Brahmavamso, Ajahn. "VINAYA The Ordination Ceremony of a Monk". Archived from the original on 16 January 2013. Retrieved 12 October 2012.

P. 72 *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* By Richard Francis Gombrich
Béer 1999, p. 71.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead. Translated by Dorje, Gyurme; Coleman, Graham; Jinpa, Thupten. New York: Viking Press. 2005. p. 508. ISBN 0-670-85886-2.

P. 74 *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* By Richard Francis Gombrich

Schuster, Nancy (30 June 1981). "Changing the Female Body: Wise Women and the Bodhisattva Career in Some Mahāratnakūṭasūtras". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 4 (1): 24–69. Archived from the original on 5 September 2020. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

Kubo Tsugunari, Yuyama Akira (tr.). *The Lotus Sutra*. Revised 2nd ed. Berkeley, Calif. : Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007. ISBN 978-1-886439-39-9, pp. 191-192

Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism, "Devadatta Chapter"

Peach, Lucinda Joy (2002). "Social Responsibility, Sex Change, and Salvation: Gender Justice in the Lotus Sūtra". *Philosophy East and West*. 52 (1): 50–74. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.820.9411. doi:10.1353/pew.2002.0003. JSTOR 1400133. S2CID 146337273. ProQuest 216882403.

Thomas E. Donaldson (2001). *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa: Text*. Abhinav Publications. p. 276. ISBN 978-81-7017-406-6. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 September 2017.

Tāranātha (Jo-nang-pa) (1990). *Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India*. Motilal Banarsidass. p. 384. ISBN 978-81-208-0696-2. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 September 2017.

Intirapālā, Kārttikēcu (2005). *The evolution of an ethnic identity: the Tamils in Sri Lanka c. 300 BCE to c. 1200 CE*. M.V. Publications for the South Asian Studies Centre, Sydney. pp. 172–174. ISBN 978-0-646-42546-7. Archived from the original on 11

October 2022. Retrieved 22 January 2022.

Indrapala 2005, p. 172,174.

Indrapala 2005, p. 173.

Indrapala 2005, p. 174.

Kanakasabhai, V. (1904). *The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago*. Asian Educational Services. ISBN 978-81-206-0150-5. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 22 January 2022.

Senarath Paranavitana (1961). *Journal of the Ceylon branch of the Royal Asiatic society# The Arya Kingdom in North Ceylon*. Vol. VII, part II. Colombo apothecaries Co. Ltd. p. 181.

Chad, Raymond (1 April 2005). "Regional Geographic Influence on Two Khmer Polities". *Salve Regina University, Faculty and Staff: Articles and Papers*: 137. Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 1 November 2015.

The Asia-Pacific World [1][permanent dead link]. Retrieved March 5, 2013.

Sanyal, Sanjeev (10 August 2016). *The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History*. Penguin UK. pp. 82–84. ISBN 978-93-86057-61-7. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 11 May 2021.

"C. 87 Stela from Mỹ Sơn B6". *isaw.nyu.edu*. Archived from the original on 12 May 2021. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Monk traditional ceremony Cambodia". 15 July 2017. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Neak Pean temple Angkor - "The entwined snakes"". *www.renown-travel.com*. Archived from the original on 24 October 2020. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Nagas". *www.cambodiasite.nl*. Archived from the original on 11 November 2020. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

Rosen, Brenda (2009). *The Mythical Creatures Bible: The Definitive Guide to Legendary Beings*. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. ISBN 978-1-4027-6536-0. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Miksic, John (13 November 2012). *Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas*. Tuttle Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4629-0910-0. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Kinney, Ann R.; Klokke, Marijke J.; Kieven, Lydia (2003). *Worshipping Siva and Buddha: The Temple Art of East Java*. University of Hawaii Press. ISBN 978-0-8248-2779-3. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Rodemeier, Susanne (1993). *Lego-lego-Platz und Naga-Darstellung . Jenseitige Kräfte im Zentrum einer Quellenstudie über die ostindonesische Insel Alor [Lego-lego Place and Naga-Image; Ideas of Supernatural Power as far as Known from Publications Concerning the Eastern Indonesia Island Alor] (Thesis) (in German)*. Archived from the original on 28 June 2020. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

Heinrich Zimmer: *Indische Mythen und Symbole*. Diederichs, Düsseldorf 1981, ISBN 3-424-00693-9

Ngaosīvat, Mayurī; Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn (1998). *Paths to conflagration: fifty years of diplomacy and warfare in Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, 1778-1828*. *Studies on Southeast Asia*. Vol. 24. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University. p. 80. ISBN 0-87727-723-0. OCLC 38909607. Archived from the original on

27 May 2012. Retrieved 16 November 2011.

สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ (2 October 2019). "ตำนานกำเนิด โขง-ซี-มูล-หนองหาน สายน้ำแห่งชีวิตของคนอีสาน" (in Thai). ศิลปวัฒนธรรม. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

"ปริศนา?? บั้งไฟพญานาค: ต่างมุมมองต่างความคิด". ASTV Manager (in Thai). 27 September 2005. Archived from the original on 9 October 2016. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

Roberts, Tyson R. (Winter 2002). "Payanak as a mythical animal and as the living species *Regalecus glesne* (oarfish, Regalecidae, Lampridiformes)" (PDF). Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society. 50 (2): 211. ISSN 0080-9462.

รัฐบาลกำหนด 'นาค' เป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำชาติไทย ต่อยอดซอฟต์พาวเวอร์ [The government has designated 'Nak' as the national symbol of Thailand, expanding on soft power], Thethaiger, 2 November 2022

รัฐบาลกำหนดให้ "นาค" เป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำชาติไทย ประเทสวัตน์ในตำนาน ต่อยอด Soft Power ขับเคลื่อนเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ [The government has designated "Nak" as the national symbol of Thailand. It is a legendary creature type, which expands on soft power to drive the creative economy.] (in Thai), Thaigov, 1 November 2022

"Naga named as national symbol", Bangkok Post, Bangkokpost, 2 November 2022

กิเลน ประลองเชิง (8 September 2011). "นาคให้น้ำ". ไทยรัฐ. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

มานิต วัลลิโภดม (25 October 2018). "สำรวจความเชื่อ "นาคสร้างเมืองมนุษย์" ที่ภายหลังคือเมือง "เชียงใหม่"" (in Thai). ศิลปวัฒนธรรม. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

Miles (28 June 2020). "Naka Cave, Thailand: The Truth Behind the Legends of Snake Rock". Journeying The Globe. Archived from the original on 10 April 2021. Retrieved 10 April 2021.

For the former logo of Faculty of Medicine, Srinakharinwirot University, see: File:Logo of Med SWU.gif. The fact was mentioned in the official pamphlet (2019, in Thai), and in the official introductory video (2015, in Thai) for the seal of the Society of Medical Students of Thailand, see: thesmst.com

ก้อง กังฟู (1 June 2014). "ปาฏิหาริย์...พญานาคราช มีปรากฏการณ์..เหนือธรรมชาติ". Thairath (in Thai). Archived from the original on 13 May 2021. Retrieved 8 October 2016.

"คำชะโนด เกาะลอยน้ำ เพชรตำนานปาล์บลับป่าคำชะโนด". dmc (in Thai). 8 October 2014.

Archived from the original on 28 September 2021. Retrieved 3 October 2016.

"พญานาคบึงโขงหลงที่เป็นข่าว.mp4". Nation TV (in Thai). 18 July 2011. Archived from the original on 7 November 2021. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

"พญานาค..วิทยาศาสตร์ กับ ความเชื่อ". Nation TV (in Thai). 31 August 2011. Archived from the original on 3 September 2011. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

"Legends". Archived from the original on 24 October 2007.

"Journey Malaysia » Tasik Chini". journeymalaysia.com. Archived from the original on 19 June 2017. Retrieved 10 May 2007.

Valiente, Tito Genova (1 January 2015). "A serpent, this earth and the end of the year". BusinessMirror. ProQuest 1644507809. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

McCoy, Alfred W. (1982). "Baylan: animist religion and Philippine peasant ideology". *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*. 10 (3): 141–194. JSTOR 29791761.

"BAKUNAWA: The Moon Eating Dragon of Philippine Mythology". The Aswang Project. 27 May 2016. Archived from the original on 13 October 2019. Retrieved 3 December 2019.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa 10.1.24

Bhāgavata Purāṇa 3.26.25

"ละคร ภูตแม่น้ำโขง". Sanook (in Thai). 13 October 2008. Archived from the original on 17 December 2017. Retrieved 31 July 2021.

สี่สิบมันเทือง 17-12-11#พัตตั้ง มณีสวาท (in Thai). ammy wareerat. 17 December 2011. Archived from the original on 7 November 2021 – via YouTube.

"Nakee – The Serpent Queen". lovefia. 1 November 2016. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 31 July 2021.

"Destination Truth" Haunted Village/Naga (TV Episode 2007) at IMDb Edit this at Wikidata

Chalk, Andy (5 May 2022). "The Naga are coming to Hearthstone Battlegrounds on May 10". PC Gamer. Archived from the original on 5 May 2022. Retrieved 10 May 2022.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Khans of Tarkir, Part 1". MAGIC: THE GATHERING. Archived from the original on 9 August 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Fate Reforged". MAGIC: THE GATHERING. Archived from the original on 20 July 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Dragons of Tarkir, Part 1". MAGIC: THE GATHERING. Archived from the original on 28 July 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

Sources

Béer, Robert (1999), *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*, Shambhala, ISBN 978-1-57062-416-2, archived from the original on 11 October 2022, retrieved 7 November 2020

Indrapala, Karthigesu (2005). *The Evolution of an Ethnic Identity - The Tamils of Sri Lanka 300 B.C.E to 1200 C.E.* M.V. Publications for the South Asian Studies Centre, Sydney. ISBN 0-646-42546-3.

Further reading

Müller-Ebeling, Claudia; Rätsch, Christian; Shahi, Surendra Bahadur (2002), *Shamanism and Tantra in the Himalayas, Inner Traditions*, ISBN 978-0-89281-913-3

Maehle, Gregor (2007), *Ashtanga Yoga: Practice and Philosophy*, New World Library, ISBN 978-1-57731-606-0

Norbu, Chögyal Namkhai (1999), *The Crystal and The Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra and Dzogchen*, Snow Lion Publications, ISBN 1-55939-135-9

Hāṇḍā, Omacanda (2004), *Naga cults and traditions in the western Himalaya*, Indus Publishing, ISBN 978-81-7387-161-0, archived from the original on 11 October 2022, retrieved 15 September 2016

Visser, Marinus Willem de (1913), *The dragon in China and Japan*, Amsterdam:J. Müller

Vogel, J. Ph. (1926), *Indian serpent-lore; or, The Nāgas in Hindu legend and art*, London, A. Probsthain, ISBN 978-81-206-1071-2, retrieved 9 November 2023

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Nāga.

Nagiana (a site dedicated to Nāga ancestors)

nagas in the Pali Canon

nagas

Image of a Seven-Headed Nāga

nagas and Serpents

Depictions of Nagas in the area of Angkor Wat in Cambodia

nagas and Naginis: Serpent Figures in Hinduism and Buddhism

Mekong River Commission paper on eels

Dr. Kanoksilpa, a pediatrician at Nong Khai hospital, studied this phenomenon for four years and concludes the most likely explanation to be seasonal accumulations of methane gas

vte

Hindu deities and texts

vte

Worship in Hinduism

vte

Topics in Buddhism

Categories: NāgasAnthropomorphic snakesIndian dragonsBuddhist deitiesHindu deitiesLegendary creatures in Hindu mythologyHindu snake worshipMythological human–animal hybridsLegendary serpentsSea and river godsShapeshiftersSnake deitiesTutelary deitiesWater spiritsSnake godsNational symbols of ThailandChthonic beings

This page was last edited on 12 December 2025, at 05:04 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Qilin

Article

Talk

Read
Edit
View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about the legendary creature. For other uses, see Qilin (disambiguation).
Qilin

Qilin-shaped incense burner (Qing dynasty, c. 17th-18th century)

Creature information

Grouping Legendary creature

Sub groupingChimera

Similar entities kirin, kỳ lân, gilen

Origin

Country China

Qilin

"Qilin" in Chinese characters

Chinese name

Chinese 麒麟

Transcriptions

Vietnamese name

Vietnamese alphabet kỳ lân

Chữ Hán 麒麟

Thai name

Thai คีรี

RTGS kilen

Korean name

Hangul 기린

Hanja 麒麟

Transcriptions

Japanese name

Kanji 麒麟

Hiragana きりん

Transcriptions

Manchu name

Manchu script ᡵᡳᡵᡳᠨ

Romanization kilin

The qilin (English: /tʃɪˈlɪn/ chee-LIN; Chinese: 麒麟; pinyin: qílín) is a legendary hooved chimerical creature that appears in Chinese mythology, and is said to appear with the

imminent arrival or death of a sage or illustrious ruler.[1] Qilin are a specific type of the lin mythological family of one-horned beasts. The qilin also appears in the mythologies of other Chinese-influenced cultures.

Origins

Qilin tomb guardian, 4th century CE

The earliest mention of the mythical qilin is in the poem 麟之趾; Lín zhī zhǐ; 'Feet of the Lin' included in the Classic of Poetry (11th – 7th c. BCE).[2][3]

麟之趾，振振公子，于嗟麟兮。
麟之定，振振公姓，于嗟麟兮。
麟之角，振振公族，于嗟麟兮。

Translation:

The feet of the Qilin, the noble sons of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

The forehead of the Qilin, the noble kinsmen of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

The horn of the Qilin, the noble clansmen of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

—[4]

Spring and Autumn Annals mentioned that a lin (麟) was captured in the 14th year of Duke Ai of Lu (魯哀公) (481 CE); Zuo Zhuan credited Confucius with identifying the lin as such.[5][6][7]

The bisyllabic form qilin (麒麟 ~ 騏驎), which carries the same generic meaning as lin alone, is attested in works dated to the Warring States period (475–221 BCE).[citation needed] Qi denotes the male and lin denotes the female[8] according to Shuowen Jiezi. [9][10]

The legendary image of the qilin became associated with the image of the giraffe in the Ming dynasty.[11][12] The identification of the qilin with giraffes began after Zheng He's 15th-century voyage to East Africa (landing, among other places, in modern-day Somalia). The Ming Dynasty bought giraffes from the Somali merchants along with zebras, incense, and various other exotic animals.[13] Zheng He's fleet brought back two giraffes to Nanjing and they were mistaken by the emperor for the mythical creature. The identification of qilin with giraffes has had a lasting influence: even today, the same word is used for the mythical animal and the giraffe in both Korean and Japanese.[14]

A Ming-era painting of a tribute giraffe, which was thought to be a qilin by court officials, from Bengal

Axel Schuessler reconstructs Old Chinese pronunciation of 麒麟 as *gərin. Finnish linguist Juha Janhunen tentatively compares *gərin to an etymon reconstructed as *kalimV,[15] denoting "whale"; and represented in the language isolate Nivkh and four different language families Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic and Samoyedic, wherein

*kalay(ə)ng means "whale" (in Nenets) and *kalVyə "mammoth" (in Enets and Nganasan). As even aborigines "vaguely familiar with the underlying real animals" often confuse the whale, mammoth, and unicorn: they conceptualized the mammoth and whale as aquatic, as well as the mammoth and unicorn possessing a single horn; for inland populations, the extant whale "remains ... an abstraction, in this respect being no different from the extinct mammoth or the truly mythical unicorn." However, Janhunen cautiously remarks that "[t]he formal and semantic similarity between *kilin < *gilin ~ *gīlin 'unicorn' and *kalimV 'whale' (but also Samoyedic *kalay- 'mammoth') is sufficient to support, though perhaps not confirm, the hypothesis of an etymological connection", and also notes a possible connection between Old Chinese and Mongolian (*)kers ~ (*)keris ~ (*)kiris "rhinoceros" (Khalkha: хирс).[16]

Description

A Qing dynasty statue of a qilin in Beijing's Summer Palace

Qilin generally have Chinese dragon-like features: similar heads with antlers, eyes with thick eyelashes, manes that always flow upward, and beards. The body is fully or partially scaled and often shaped like an ox, deer, or horse, or more commonly a goat. [17][18] They are always shown with cloven hooves.[19] While dragons in China (and thus qilin) are also most commonly depicted as golden, qilin may be of any color or even various colors, and can be depicted as bejeweled or exhibiting a jewel-like brilliance.[20]

The qilin is depicted throughout a wide range of Chinese art, sometimes with parts of their bodies on fire.[19]

Legends tell that qilin have appeared in the garden of the legendary Yellow Emperor and in the capital of Emperor Yao; both events bore testimony to the benevolent nature of the rulers.[18] It has also been told that the birth of the great sage Confucius was foretold by the arrival of a qilin.[1]

Qilin as unicorns

One-horned beast depicted in ceramic model from Northern Wei period (386–534)

In modern times, the depictions of qilin have often fused with the Western concept of unicorns,[citation needed] and qilin (麒麟) is often translated into English as "unicorn". The Han dynasty dictionary Shuowen Jiezi describes qi as single-horned,[9] and it can sometimes be depicted as having a single horn. The translation, however, may be misleading, as qilin can also be depicted as having two horns. In modern Chinese, "one-horned beast" (独角兽; 獨角獸; Dújiǎoshòu) is used for "unicorns". A number of different Chinese mythical creatures can be depicted with a single horn, and a qilin depicted with one horn may be called a "one-horned qilin" in Chinese.[citation needed]

Nevertheless, the mythical and etymological connections between the creatures have been noted by various cultural studies[14][15][16] and even the Chinese government, which has minted silver, gold, and platinum commemorative coins depicting both

archetypal creatures.[21]

Other cultural representations

Japan

Kirin, which has also come to be used as the modern Japanese word for a giraffe, are similar to qilin. Japanese art tends to depict the kirin as more deer-like than in Chinese art. Alternatively, it is depicted as a dragon shaped like a deer, but with an ox's tail[22] instead of a lion's tail. They are also often portrayed as partially unicorn-like in appearance, but with a backwards curving horn.

Korea

Girin or kirin (기린) is the Korean form of qilin. It is described as a maned creature with the torso of a deer, an ox tail with the hooves of a horse. The girin were initially depicted as more deer-like, however over time they have transformed into more horse-like.[23] They were one of the four divine creatures along with the dragon, phoenix, and turtle. Girin were extensively used in Korean royal and Buddhist arts.

In modern Korean, the term "girin" is used for "giraffe".

Thailand

In Thailand, the qilin is known as "gilen" (Thai: กิลิน), and is a member of the pantheon of Thai Himapant forest mythical animals. It is most probable that the Gilen was introduced into the pantheon under the influence of the Tai Yai who came down from Southern China to settle in Siam in ancient times, and the legend was probably incorporated into the Himapant legends of Siam in this manner. The Gilen is a mixture of various animals which come from differing elemental environments, representing elemental magical forces present within each personified creature. Many of the Himapant animals actually represent gods and devas of the Celestial Realms, and bodhisattvas, who manifest as personifications which represent the true nature of each creature deity through the symbolism of the various body parts amalgamated into the design of the Mythical creature.[24]

In Phra Aphai Mani, the masterpiece epic poem of Sunthorn Phu, a renowned poet of the 18th century, there is a monster that is Sudsakorn's steed, one of the main characters in the epic. This creature was called "Ma Nin Mangkorn" (Thai: ม้านิลมังกร, "ceylonite dragon horse") and is depicted as having diamond fangs, ceylonite scales, and a birthmark on the tongue. It was a mixture of horse, dragon, deer antlers, fish scales, and Phaya Nak tail, and has black sequins all over. Its appearance resembles a qilin.[25]

Qilin Dance

The Qilin dance is traditionally performed by the Hakka people.[26][27] The Qilin is a mythical creature believed to symbolize good fortune, prosperity, and harmony,[28] and performers wear ornate Qilin costumes with vibrant colors and intricate details to

resemble the mythical creature.[28]

The Qilin costume features a single horn in the middle, with finned ridges lined with fur. [26] The dance involves graceful and synchronized movements that mimic cats and tigers.[28] The performance routine typically tells of a Qilin exiting its lair, playfully move round, and looking for vegetable to eat. After eating from the vegetable, it spits it out, and it also spits a jade book, before moving around and returning back to its lair.[26]

The dance is accompanied by music played on traditional Chinese instruments, including drums, flutes, and cymbals.[27] Today, similar to the Chinese Lion and Dragon dances, the Qilin dance is commonly performed during important Chinese celebrations and festivals, such as Chinese New Year and weddings, it is also performed to preserve cultural traditions and enhance community cohesion.[26][27]

Gallery

Porcelain qilin with the head and scaly body of a dragon, tail of a lion and cloven hoofs like a deer, its body enveloped in sacred flames (Qing dynasty, c. 1750)

Porcelain qilin with the head and scaly body of a dragon, tail of a lion and cloven hoofs like a deer, its body enveloped in sacred flames (Qing dynasty, c. 1750)

Qilin with rider (Qing dynasty, c. 1800-1894)

Qilin with rider (Qing dynasty, c. 1800-1894)

Plate with a qilin in the center (Yuan dynasty, c. 1350)

Plate with a qilin in the center (Yuan dynasty, c. 1350)

Embroidered qilin buzi (Qing dynasty, 19th century)

Embroidered qilin buzi (Qing dynasty, 19th century)

Ceramic Kỳ lân statue (Later Lê or Nguyen dynasty, c. 17th-19th century)

Ceramic Kỳ lân statue (Later Lê or Nguyen dynasty, c. 17th-19th century)

Qilin, dragon and lion set in floral sprays (Ottoman empire, mid-16th century)

Qilin, dragon and lion set in floral sprays (Ottoman empire, mid-16th century)

An illustration of qilin and simurgh in Gulistan (1582)

An illustration of qilin and simurgh in Gulistan (1582)

Bronze qilin paperweight (Ming dynasty, c. 15th century)

Bronze qilin paperweight (Ming dynasty, c. 15th century)

Qilin depicted in the Gujin Tushu Jicheng (Qing dynasty, c. 1700-1725)

Qilin depicted in the Gujin Tushu Jicheng (Qing dynasty, c. 1700-1725)

Tai Si encountering a qilin, depicted in Jiao Bingzhen's Virtuous Empresses and

Empresses Dowager in Successive Dynasties (Qing dynasty, 18th century)
Tai Si encountering a qilin, depicted in Jiao Bingzhen's Virtuous Empresses and
Empresses Dowager in Successive Dynasties (Qing dynasty, 18th century)

Queen Mother of the West Riding a Kirin, Kanō Kyūseki (Edo period, early 18th century)
Queen Mother of the West Riding a Kirin, Kanō Kyūseki (Edo period, early 18th century)

A qilin at the Ming tombs in the dragon, fish, and ox style (Ming dynasty, c. 15th-17th century)

A qilin at the Ming tombs in the dragon, fish, and ox style (Ming dynasty, c. 15th-17th century)

See also

Chinese spiritual world concepts

Chinthe

Four Holy Beasts

Kanglasha

Longma

Nian

Nongshaba

Pakhangba

Pixiu

Poubi Lai

Questing Beast

Serpopard

Shaanxi Kylins

Shisa

Singha

Sin-you

Taoroinai

Xiezhi

Yali

References

"qilin (Chinese mythology)". Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 24 July 2011.

Classic of Poetry "Airs of Zhou and the South – Lin's Feet" translated by James Legge
Durrant, Li, & Schaberg (translators) (2016). Zuo tradition: Commentary on the Spring
and Autumn Annals. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press. p. 1920, n. 292.
quote: "It is significant that the earliest source known to mention the lin itself is “Lin zhi
zhi” 麟之趾, or “The Foot of the Lin”

Kong, Qiu. Eds.(2016). 诗经 [The She King] (Legge, J. & Shi J.H. Transl.). 中州古籍出版社 [Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House]. ISBN 978-7-5348-6422-3.

古建上的主要装饰纹样——麒麟 古建园林技术 —作者:徐华铛 Archived 30 September 2007 at the Wayback Machine

Zuozhuan "Duke Ai – 14th year – jing & zhuan"

Durrant, Li, & Schaberg (translators) (2016). Zuo tradition: Commentary on the Spring
and Autumn Annals. pp. 1919–1921

ChinaKnowledge.de

SWJZ Radical 鹿" quote: "麟: 大牝鹿也。……麒: 仁獸也。麋身牛尾, 一角。……麇: 牝麒也。" translation: "Lín (麟): a large female deer. [...] Qí (麒): a humane beast. With elaphure's body, ox's tail, and one horn. [...] Lín (麇): female qí."

Parker, Jeannie Thomas (2018) *The Mythic Chinese unicorn*. Victoria: Friesen Press. p. 44

此“麟”非彼“麟” 专家称萨摩麟并非传说中麒麟

"What Kind of Animal Was the Questing Beast?". *Arthuriana*. 14 (2): 66–69. 2004. ISSN 1078-6279. JSTOR 27870605.

Wilson, Samuel M. (December 1992). "The Emperor's Giraffe". *Natural History*. Vol. 101, no. 12. pp. 22–25. Archived from the original on 2 December 2008. Retrieved 14 April 2012.

Parker, J. T.: "The Mythic Chinese Unicorn"

Janhunen, J. (2011). "Unicorn, Mammoth, Whale: mythological and etymological connections of zoonyms in North and East Asia". *Linguistics, Archaeology and the Human Past, Occasional Paper*, 12, 189–222.

"Хирс in Bolor dictionary". Archived from the original on 26 September 2022. Retrieved 31 January 2019.

"Charger with a qilin, anonymous, c. 1350". Rijksmuseum. Retrieved 15 May 2022.

Liscomb, Kathryn (2016). "9: How the Giraffe Became a Qilin: Intercultural Signification in Ming Dynasty Arts". *The Zoomorphic Imagination in Chinese Art and Culture*. University of Hawai'i Press. pp. 341–378. ISBN 9780824872564.

Bush, Susan (2016). "2: Labeling the Creatures: Some Problems in Han and Six Dynasties Iconography". *The Zoomorphic Imagination in Chinese Art and Culture*. University of Hawai'i Press. pp. 76–77. ISBN 9780824872564.

Yoshida, Masako (2014). "Trade Stories: Chinese Export Embroideries in the Metropolitan Museum". *Metropolitan Museum Journal*. 49 (1): 4–5. doi:10.1086/680031. JSTOR 10.1086/680031. S2CID 192217718.

"5 Yuan, China". en.numista.com. Numista. Retrieved 13 December 2017.

Griffis, William Elliot (2007). *The Religions of Japan*. Bibliobazaar. p. 39. ISBN 978-1-4264-9918-0.

기린 : 네이버캐스트

"Taep Payatorn Riding Qilin Himapant Lion Hlang Yant – Nuea Pong Maha Sanaeh Luan – Ajarn Warut – Wat Pong Wonaram". *Buddha Magic Multimedia & Publications*. Retrieved 12 January 2016.

Pralongchoeng, Gilen (20 September 2014). "ม้ามังกร" [Dragon horse]. *Thai Rath* (in Thai). Retrieved 7 August 2021.

"The people of Wufu are prosperous and the auspicious beasts are coming— Talking about the Hakka Kirin Dance". Archived from the original on 25 March 2017.

Lo, Wai Ling (1 June 2022). "Recreating Local Tradition: The Study of the Hang Hau Hakka Unicorn Dance in Hong Kong". *Asian Studies, the Twelfth International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12)*. 1: 401–406.

doi:10.5117/9789048557820/icas.2022.047. ISBN 9789048557820. ISSN 2949-6721.

"What Is The Qilin Dance?". *Google Arts & Culture*. Retrieved 10 October 2023.

External links

Media related to Qilin at Wikimedia Commons

vte

Chinese mythology

vte

Japanese folklore

Categories: Chinese legendary creaturesFour Holy BeastsJapanese legendary creaturesKorean legendary creaturesMythological deerUnicorns

This page was last edited on 25 November 2025, at 19:57 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Lists of deities by cultural sphere

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This is an index to deities of the different religions, cultures and mythologies of the world, listed by region or culture.

Africa

Poster of a Mami Wata, "serpent priestess" painted ca. 1926 by German (Hamburg) artist Schleisinger, displayed in shrines as a popular image of Mami Wata in Africa and in the Diaspora.[1][2]

North Africa

Berber deities

Guanche deities

Egyptian deities

Osiris, lord of the dead. His green skin symbolizes rebirth

Sub-Saharan Africa

African deities

Alusi

Yoruba deities

Afro-American religion

Loa

Orisha

Americas

Central America

Aztec deities

Maya deities

North America

Inuit deities

Native (North and South) American deities

South America

Incan deities

Guarani deities

Mapuche deities

Muisca deities

Asia

Caucasus

Armenian deities

Georgian deities

Vainakh deities

Central Asia

Turkic deities

East Asia

Chinese deities

Taoist pure ones

Japanese deities

Korean deities

North Asia

Siberian deities

South Asia

The image illustrates the Hindu belief that each part of the cow embodies a particular deity

Buddhas

Buddhist Bodhisattvas

Buddhist deities

Hindu deities

Rigvedic deities (see also Proto-Indo-Iranian religion)

Sri Lankan Tamil local deities

Tamil Nadu local deities

Tirthankara

Southeast Asia

Indonesian deities

Manipuri deities

Ancestral deities of Manipur

King of Gods in Manipuri mythology

King of Serpent deities in Manipuri mythology

Philippine deities

West Asia

Anatolia

Hittite deities

Hurrian deities

Lydian deities

Middle East

Mesopotamian deities

Assyro-Babylonian pantheon (see also Family tree of the Babylonian gods)

Kassite deities

Sumerian deities

Ugaritic deities

Semitic deities

Canaanite deities

Elohim in Abrahamic religions

Pre-Islamic Arabian deities

Jinn

Nabataean deities

Persia

Yazata, see also Proto-Indo-Iranian religion

Elam

Europe

Baltic deities

Latvian deities

Lithuanian deities
 Basque deities
 Celtic deities
 Irish deities
 Etruscan deities
 Finnic deities
 Germanic deities
 Anglo-Saxon deities
 List of Norse gods and goddesses
 Greek deities (see also Greek mythological figures, Twelve Olympians, Ancient Greek religion, Mycenaean deities)
 Neoplatonic triad
 Hungarian deities
 Lusitani deities
 Paleo-Balkan deities (Dacian/Illyrian/Thracian)
 List of Roman deities
 Sami deities
 Slavic deities
 Thelemic deities
 Oceania
 Australian Aboriginal deities
 Polynesian deities
 Hawaiian deities
 Māori deities of New Zealand
 Rapa Nui deities of Easter Island
 References
 Jell-Bahlsen 1997, p. 105
 Chesi 1997, p. 255)
 vte
 Lists of mythological figures
 By geography
 AfricanAlbanianArabianArmenianAustralian
 AboriginalAztecBalkanBasqueBatakCanaaniteCatalanCeltic
 ListChahtaChineseEfikEgyptian
 IndexListElamiteEstonianEtruscanFinnishGeorgianGermanic Anglo-SaxonGreek
 CreaturesDeitiesHomeric charactersMinor figuresMortalsMycenaean
 deitiesOceanidsTrojan War
 charactersGuancheHaudenosauneeHawaiianHebrideanIndian-origin religions Hindu
 ListRigvedicBuddhist ChinaJapanJain ListMeitei
 ListSylhetHittiteHungarianHurrianIndonesianInuitIrishJapaneseKassiteKomiKoreanLakot
 aLithuanianMāoriMā'ohiMayaMesopotamianMicronesianMuskogeeMyanmarNative
 American
 ZapotecOssetianPersianPhilippinePurépechaRomanSamiSamoanSlavicTurkicTuvaluan
 UgariticVainakhYoruba
 By association

[Agriculture](#)[Art](#)[Beauty](#)[Chaos](#)[Creator](#)[Dawn](#)[Death](#)[Earth](#)[Fate and Time](#)[Fertility](#)[Fire](#)[Fortune](#)[Health](#)[Household](#)[Hunting](#)[King of the gods](#)[Knowledge](#)[Light](#)[Liminal](#)[Love and Lust](#)[Moon](#)[List Nations](#)[Nature](#)[Night](#)[Psychopomp](#)[Rain](#)[Resurrection](#)[Sky](#)[Smithing](#)[Sun](#)[List Thunder](#)[Tree](#)[Trickery](#) [List Tutelary](#)[Vegetation](#)[Volcano](#)[War](#)[Water](#)[Weather](#)[Wind](#)

[Portal Category](#)

[Disambiguation icon](#)

This article includes a religion-related list of lists.

Categories: [Lists of religion lists](#)[Lists of deities](#)

This page was last edited on 30 April 2025, at 07:48 (UTC).

Text is available under the [Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License](#); additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the [Terms of Use](#) and [Privacy Policy](#). Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the [Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.](#), a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Wikipedia](#)[The Free Encyclopedia](#)

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

[List of deities by classification](#)

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

This is an index to deities of the different religions, cultures and mythologies of the world, listed by type of deity.

[Motif-index](#)

A basic classification of the types of gods as based on the [Motif-Index of Folk-Literature](#), by [Stith Thompson](#):^[1]

[A0 Creator](#)

[A100—A199. The gods in general](#)

A101. Supreme God
A104. The Making of the Gods
A107. Gods of Darkness and Light (darkness thought of as evil and light as good).
A109.1. Triple deity
A116. Triplet gods
A111.1. Mother of the gods
A111.2. Father of the Gods
A117.5. Gods as spirits of the deified dead
A131. Gods with animal features
A132.3. Equine god / goddess
A132.5. Bear god / goddess
A132.9. Cattle god / goddess
A161.2. King of the Gods
A177.1. Gods as Dupe or Tricksters
A192. Death or departure of the gods
A193. Gods of Dying-and-rising
A200—A299. Gods of the Upper World
A210. Gods of the Sky
A220. Gods of the Sun
A240. Gods of the Moon
A250. Gods of the Stars
A260. Gods of Light
A270. Gods of the Dawn
A280. Gods of the Weather
A281. Gods of Storms
A282. Gods of the Wind
A284. Gods of Thunder
A287. Gods of Rain
A300—A399. Gods of the Underworld
A310. God of the World of the Dead
A311. Conductor of the Dead
A400—A499. Gods of the Earth (The Human Sphere)
A400. Gods of the Earth
A401. Mother Earth
A405. Gods of Nature
A410. Local Gods
A411. Gods of the Hearth and Household
A415. Gods of Clans or Nations
A420. Gods of Water
A430. Gods of Vegetation
A431. Gods of Fertility
A435. Gods of Trees and Forests
A440. Gods of Animals
A450. Gods of Trades and Professions
A451. Artisan Gods

A452. Gods of Hunting
A454. Gods of Healing
A460. Gods of Abstractions (also Z110. Abstractions personified)
A461. Gods of Wisdom
A463. Gods of Fate
A463.1. the Fates (goddesses who preside over the fates of men)
A464. Gods of Justice
A465. Gods of the Arts
A472. Gods of Sleep
A473. Gods of Wealth
A475. Gods of Love and Lust
A484. Gods of Oaths
A485. Gods of War
A486. the Furies (goddesses of vengeance)
A487. Gods of Death
A490. Miscellaneous Gods of the Earth
A491. God of Travellers
A493. Gods of Fire
A500—A599. Demigods and Culture Heroes
A502. Heroes or demigods as fourth race of men.
A510. Origin of the culture hero (demigod).
A515.1.1. Twin culture heroes.
A521. Culture hero as dupe or trickster.
A531. Culture hero (demigod) overcomes monsters.
Other deities by association
Gods of Chaos
Gods of Doorways and Thresholds
Gods of the Night
Queen of Heaven
Gods of Smithing
Gods of wine and beer / Goddess
Gods of poppy
Other classifications
Apotheosis
Avatar
Death
Deified heroes
Divine Council
God / Goddess
Horned deity
Imperial Cult
Incarnation
Master of Animals / Potnia Theron
Mother Nature
Reincarnation / Rebirth

Sacred king
Son of God
Theophany
Tutelary deity
Related concepts
Legendary creature
Hybrid
Human hybrid
Liminal being
Pantheon
Spirit
Angel
Demon / Devil
Demonology / Archdemon
Fairy
Geist
Ghost
Holy Spirit
Soul
Water spirit
Lists
Demigods
Ghosts
Goddesses
Legendary creatures
Names of God
Pantheons
Theological demons
Ars Goetia
Sigils
Spirits in grimoires
See also

Religious cosmology

References

Thompson, Stith (1955–1958). *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature*. Vol. 1–6. Indiana University Press.

vte

Lists of mythological figures

By geography

AfricanAlbanianArabianArmenianAustralian

AboriginalAztecBalkanBasqueBatakCanaaniteCatalanCeltic

ListChahtaChineseEfikEgyptian

IndexListElamiteEstonianEtruscanFinnishGeorgianGermanic Anglo-SaxonGreek

CreaturesDeitiesHomeric charactersMinor figuresMortalsMycenaean

deitiesOceanidsTrojan War

charactersGuancheHaudenosauneeHawaiianHebrideanIndian-origin religions Hindu
ListRigvedicBuddhist ChinaJapanJain ListMeitei
ListSylhetHittiteHungarianHurrianIndonesianInuitIrishJapaneseKassiteKomiKoreanLakot
aLithuanianMāoriMā'ohiMayaMesopotamianMicronesiaMuskogeanMyanmarNative
American
ZapotecOssetianPersianPhilippinePurépechaRomanSamiSamoanSlavicTurkicTuvaluan
UgariticVainakhYoruba
By association
AgricultureArtBeautyChaosCreatorDawnDeathEarthFate and
TimeFertilityFireFortuneHealthHouseholdHuntingKing of the
godsKnowledgeLightLiminalLove and LustMoon
ListNationsNatureNightPsychopompRainResurrectionSkySmithingSun
ListThunderTreeTrickery ListTutelaryVegetationVolcanoWarWaterWeatherWind
Portal Category
Category: Lists of deities
This page was last edited on 1 November 2024, at 19:50 (UTC).
Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;
additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and
Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit organization.
Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of
ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view
Wikimedia Foundation
Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate
Create account
Log in
Lists of deities

Article
Talk
Read
Edit
View history

Tools
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Mythology
Mythologies
Types
Lists

[Related concepts](#)

[See also](#)

[vte](#)

This is an index of lists of deities of the different cultures, religions, and mythologies of the world.

[List of deities by classification](#)

[Lists of deities by cultural sphere](#)

[List of fictional deities](#)

[List of goddesses](#)

[List of people who have been considered deities](#)

[Names of God, names of deities of monotheistic religions](#)

[vte](#)

[Religion](#)

[Disambiguation icon](#)

This article includes a religion-related list of lists.

Categories: [Lists of religion lists](#)[Lists of deities](#)

This page was last edited on 4 December 2025, at 21:40 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Wikipedia](#)[The Free Encyclopedia](#)

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

[List of mythologies](#)

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

The following is a list of mythologies.

Mythologies by region

Mythology

Mythologies

Types

Lists

Related concepts

See also

vte

Africa

See also: West African mythology

Efik mythology

Egyptian mythology

Ekoi mythology

Hadza mythology

Kalenjin mythology

Lozi mythology

Lugbara mythology

Malagasy mythology

Mbuti mythology

Somali mythology

Tumbuka mythology

Americas

Main article: Mythologies of the indigenous peoples of the Americas

See also: Raven Tales

North America

Abenaki mythology

American mythology

Assiniboine mythology

Blackfoot mythology

Californian narratives

Achomawi traditional narratives

Atsugewi traditional narratives

Cahto traditional narratives

Cahuilla mythology

Chemehuevi traditional narratives

Chimariko traditional narratives

Chumash traditional narratives

Cupeño traditional narratives

Eel River Athapaskan traditional narratives

Halchidhoma traditional narratives

Hupa traditional narratives

Karuk traditional narratives

Kawaiisu traditional narratives

Kitanemuk traditional narratives

Kumeyaay traditional narratives
Maidu traditional narratives
Mattole traditional narratives
Miwok mythology
Coast Miwok traditional narratives
Lake Miwok traditional narratives
Plains and Sierra Miwok traditional narratives
Modoc traditional narratives
Mohave traditional narratives
Mono traditional narratives
Northern Paiute traditional narratives
Ohlone mythology
Luiseño traditional narratives
Pomo traditional narratives
Salinan traditional narratives
Serrano traditional narratives
Shasta traditional narratives
Tolowa traditional narratives
Tongva traditional narratives
Tubatulabal traditional narratives
Wappo traditional narratives
Washoe traditional narratives
Western Shoshone traditional narratives
Wintu-Nomlaki traditional narratives
Patwin traditional narratives
Wiyot traditional narratives
Yana traditional narratives
Yokuts traditional narratives
Yuki traditional narratives
Yurok traditional narratives
Chaná mythology
Chilote mythology
Choctaw mythology
Creek mythology
Fuegian mythology
Selk'nam mythology
Guarani mythology
Haida mythology
Ho-Chunk mythology
Hopi mythology
Innu mythology
Iroquois mythology
Seneca mythology
Lakota mythology
Lenape mythology

Kwakwaka'wakw mythology
Muscogee mythology
Navajo mythology
Nuu-chah-nulth mythology
Salishan oral narratives
Pawnee mythology
Tsimshian mythology
Ute mythology
Zuni mythology
Caribbean
Haitian mythology
Taíno mythology
Central America
Aztec mythology
Huichol mythology
Lencan mythology
Maya mythology
Talamancan mythology
South America
Brazilian mythology
Chilean mythology
Chilote mythology
Guarani mythology
Inca mythology
Muisca mythology
Pemon mythology
Q'ero mythology
Quechua mythology
Asia
Main article: List of Asian mythologies
Caucasus
Armenian mythology
Georgian mythology
Ossetian mythology
Central Asia
Ket mythology
Turkic mythology
East Asia
Chinese mythology
Japanese mythology
Korean mythology
Samseong mythology
Mongol mythology
Nivkh mythology
South & Southeast Asia

Bengali mythology
Buddhist mythology
Burmese mythology
Hindu mythology
Ayyavazhi mythology
Vedic mythology
Indonesian mythology
Balinese mythology
Batak mythology
Kashmiri mythology
Meitei mythology
Philippine mythology
Romani mythology
Tamil mythology
Tibetan mythology
Vietnamese mythology
West Asia

Further information: Religions of the ancient Near East

Christian mythology
Hittite mythology
Islamic mythology
Jewish mythology
Kurdish mythology
Mazandarani mythology
Mesopotamian mythology
Persian mythology
Talysh mythology

Europe

"European mythology" redirects here. For falsehoods about the European Union, see Euromyth.

Eastern Europe
Armenian mythology
Georgian mythology
Hungarian mythology
Komi mythology
Mari mythology
Paleo-Balkan mythology
Proto-Indo-European mythology
Northern Europe
Baltic mythology
Latvian mythology
Lithuanian mythology
Prussian mythology
Cornish mythology
Finnic mythologies

Estonian mythology
Finnish mythology
Germanic mythology
English mythology
Norse mythology
Hebridean mythology
Irish mythology
Manx mythology
Scottish mythology
Welsh mythology
Southern Europe
Basque mythology
Cantabrian mythology
Catalan mythology
Classical mythology
Galician mythology
Greek mythology
Lusitanian mythology
Italian mythology
Roman mythology
Western Europe
Alpine mythology
Celtic mythology
Breton mythology
Continental Germanic mythology
French mythology
Low Countries Mythology
Oceania
Main article: Mythology of Oceania
Australian mythology
Australian Aboriginal mythology
Larrakia mythology
Yolnu mythology
Melanesian mythology
Fijian mythology
Papuan mythology
Micronesian mythology
Polynesian narrative
Cook Islands mythology
Niuean mythology
Mangarevan narrative
Māori mythology
Rapa Nui mythology
Samoan mythology
Tahiti and Society Islands mythology

Tongan narrative

Tuvaluan mythology

Folklore

Main articles: Folklore, Tall tale, and Legend

See also: Western folklore

Albanian folklore

American folklore

African American folklore

Hawaiian folklore

Minnesotan folklore

Mormon folklore

West Virginian folklore

Australian folklore

Azerbaijani folklore

British folklore

English folklore

Manx folklore

Scottish folklore

Hebridean folklore

Welsh folklore

Canadian folklore

Caribbean folklore

Dominican folklore

Chinese folklore

Colombian folklore

Czech folklore

Danish folklore

Esan folklore

Estonian folklore

Finn folklore

French folklore

German folklore

Greek folklore

Ancient Greek folklore

Honduran folklore

Indian folklore

Maldivian folklore

Meitei folklore

Naga folklore

Nepalese folklore

Pakistani folklore

Punjabi folklore

Sindhi folklore

Indonesian folklore

Iranian folklore

Irish folklore
Italian folklore
Japanese folklore
Kalenjin folklore
Korean folklore
Kosovar folklore
Lao folklore
Low Countries folklore
Belgian folklore
Malaysian folklore
Malay folklore
Maltese folklore
Mexican folklore
Nordic folklore
Qatari folklore
Roman folklore
Romanian folklore
Russian folklore
Rwandan folklore
Salvadoran folklore
Sarajevan folklore
Serbian folklore
South African folklore
Afrikaans folklore
Spanish folklore
Swiss folklore
Thai folklore
Turkish folklore
Ugandan folklore
Ukrainian folklore
Fictional mythologies
Further information: Mythopoeia
List of fictional deities
Cthulhu Mythos
Glorantha
William Blake's mythology
J.R.R. Tolkien's Middle-earth
Discworld
See also
 Mythology portal
Archaeomythology
Architectural mythology
List of religions and spiritual traditions
List of creation myths
List of legendary creatures by type

[List of mythology books and sources](#)

[List of mythological objects](#)

[List of culture heroes](#)

[List of world folk-epics](#)

[Lists of deities](#)

[Lists of legendary creatures](#)

[National myth](#)

[Mythopoeia](#)

[Categories: Mythology](#)[Mythology-related lists](#)[Religion-related lists](#)

This page was last edited on 9 December 2025, at 20:56 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Wikipedia](#)[The Free Encyclopedia](#)

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

[Lists of legendary creatures](#)

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[View source](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

[Page semi-protected](#)

[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)

The following is a list of lists of legendary creatures, beings and entities from the folklore record. Entries consist of legendary and unique creatures, not of particularly unique individuals of a commonly known species.

[Alphabetical lists](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(A\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(B\)](#)

[List of legendary creatures \(C\)](#)

- List of legendary creatures (D)
- List of legendary creatures (E)
- List of legendary creatures (F)
- List of legendary creatures (G)
- List of legendary creatures (H)
- List of legendary creatures (I)
- List of legendary creatures (J)
- List of legendary creatures (K)
- List of legendary creatures (L)
- List of legendary creatures (M)
- List of legendary creatures (N)
- List of legendary creatures (O)
- List of legendary creatures (P)
- List of legendary creatures (Q)
- List of legendary creatures (R)
- List of legendary creatures (S)
- List of legendary creatures (T)
- List of legendary creatures (U)
- List of legendary creatures (V)
- List of legendary creatures (W)
- List of legendary creatures (X)
- List of legendary creatures (Y)
- List of legendary creatures (Z)
- Specific area-related lists
 - Category:Folklore by country
 - Category:Folklore by region
 - Portal:Religion
 - Category: Supernatural
 - Legendary creatures of the Argentine Northwest region
 - List of African mythological figures
 - List of creatures in Brazilian folklore
 - List of mythical creatures in Egyptian mythology
 - List of Chilote mythological creatures
 - List of creatures in Meitei folklore
 - List of Greek mythological creatures
 - Mythology of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas
 - List of legendary creatures from China
 - List of legendary creatures from France
 - List of legendary creatures from Japan
 - List of legendary creatures in Hindu mythology
 - List of named animals and plants in Germanic heroic legend
 - List of ghosts- Asian folklore
 - List of ghosts in Thai culture
 - List of Persian mythology
 - European folklore

Folklore of the Dominican Republic
Folklore of India
Folklore of Indonesia
List of Italian folklore
Folklore of Malaysia
Folklore of the Maldives
List of Nordic folklore
Punjabi folklore
Romani folklore
Folklore of Puerto Rico
Jewish folklore
Qatari folklore
List of Romanian folklore
List of Turkish folklore
Folklore of the United States
List of Philippine mythological creatures
List of spiritual entities in Islam
Folklore of the Low Countries
Mythical creatures in Burmese folklore
Supernatural beings in Slavic religion
Creature type-based lists
Main article: List of legendary creatures by type
See also

Wikimedia Commons has media related to legendary creatures.

Bestiary

Lists of fictional species

List of urban legends

vte

Lists of fictional life forms

vte

Urban legends

Disambiguation icon

This article includes a fiction-related list of lists.

Categories: Lists of fiction listsLists of legendary creaturesLists of fictional characters by type

This page was last edited on 5 November 2025, at 15:59 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

List of legendary creatures by type

Article

Talk

Read

View source

View history

Tools

Page semi-protected

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This list of legendary creatures from mythology, folklore and fairy tales is sorted by their classification or affiliation. Creatures from modern fantasy fiction and role-playing games are not included.

This is a dynamic list and may never be able to satisfy particular standards for completeness. You can help by editing the page to add missing items, with references to reliable sources.

Animals, creatures associated with

Arthropods

See also: Category:Mythological arthropods

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a greenish-red fiery light reminiscent of fireflies

Karkinos (Greek) – Cancer the crab

Gold-digging ant (Greek) – Reported by Herodotus to live in either Ethiopia or the Indian subcontinent

Khepri (Ancient Egyptian) – Beetle who pushes the sun

Mothman (American cryptid) – Man with moth wings and features

Myrmecoleon (Christian) – Ant-lion

Myrmidons (Greek) – Warriors created from ants by Zeus

Pabilsag (Babylonian) – Sagittarius-like creature with scorpion tail

Scorpion man (Babylonian) – Protector of travellers

Selket (Ancient Egyptian) – Scorpion death/healing goddess

Zaratan (Arabic) – Giant crab mistaken for an island

Spiders

See also: Category:Mythological spiders

Aiapæc (Moche) – Creator god, often seen as a spider with an anthropomorphic face and

jaguar fangs

Anansi (West African) – Trickster spider

Arachne (Greek) – Weaver cursed into a spider

Areop-Enap (Nauru) – Creator god, made the earth and sky from a giant clam shell

Chaffee Spider (American cryptid) – Large cave spider kept as pest control and guard dogs by early settlers in Chaffee, Colorado, before mysteriously vanishing off the face of the earth

Christmas Spider (Ukrainian) – Spider whose webs became the first tinsel on a tree

Djieien (Seneca) – Man-sized spider who survived most attacks because its heart was buried underground.

Iktomi (Lakota) – Trickster spider. Also known in parts of the Rockies

Jorōgumo (Japanese) – Ghost woman who shapeshifts into a spider

Spider_Grandmother (Native American) – Important figure across many North West Native American Cultures

Tsuchigumo (Japanese) – Shapeshifting giant spider

Birds

See also: Category:Legendary birds

Ababil (Islamic) – A miraculous bird

Adarna (Philippine) – Colorful bird with healing powers, puts people to sleep, and turns people into stone

Avalerion (English) – Eagle-like bird; only a single pair was said to live at any time

Alicanto (Chilean) – Bird with luminescent feathers which feeds on gold or silver [1]

Anqa (Arabian) – Large, mysterious, or fabulous female bird

Anzû (Mesopotamian) – Massive bird who can breathe fire and water

Bare-fronted Hoodwink (Cryptid) – Bird with the ability to be "almost seen", created to satirize birdwatchers

Caladrius (Roman) – White bird with healing powers

Chalkydri (Jewish) – Heavenly creatures of the sun

Chamrosh (Persian mythology) – Creature with the body of a dog, and the head and wings of a bird

Cinnamon bird (Greek) – Arabian bird in Greek mythology that builds nests out of cinnamon

Devil Bird (Sri Lankan) – Shrieking bird who predicts death

Gagana (Russian) – Miraculous bird with an iron beak and copper claws

Gandabherunda (Hindu) – Two-headed magical bird

Garuda (Hindu) – Known as the primordial bird and the progenitor of all birds; vehicle of Lord Vishnu

Hakawai (Māori) – Bird that was sometimes heard but not usually seen

Hudhud (Islamic) – Messenger to prophets

Jingwei (Chinese) – A bird who is determined to fill up the sea

Luan (Chinese) – A bird which carries a shield and tramples on snakes while wearing one on its breast

Minokawa (Philippine) – Giant, dragon-like bird

Nine-headed Bird (Chinese) – A totem creature, predecessor to the Fenghuang

Oozlum bird (English) – A satirical creature that flies in ever-decreasing circles until it

disappears into its own backside

Pamola (Abenaki) – A bird/moose spirit who causes cold weather

Peng (Chinese) – An enormous bird transformed from a giant fish which flies over the great oceans

Phoenix (Greek) –

Bennu (Egyptian) – self-creating bird deity

Chol (Biblical) – regenerative bird

Firebird (Slavic) – legendary bird with glowing eyes and feathers, brings misfortune if captured.

Fenghuang (Chinese) – a phoenix who reigns over all other birds

Huma bird (Persian) – a bird that flies too high to be seen and never lands

Konrul and Toghrul (Turkic)

Paskunji (Georgian/ Caucasus) phoenix like underworld dwelling bird. Kills the snakes on the path to the afterlife & aid heroes on quests.

Vermilion Bird (Chinese)

Piasa (Native American) – Based on monster depicted on Illinois rock painting near the Mississippi River

Qingniao (Chinese) – Blue or green messenger birds of the Queen Mother of the West

Ra (Ancient Egyptian) – Sun deity often depicted with falcon features

Rain Bird (Native American) – Bird who brought rain

Raróg (Slavic) – Fiery demon falcon

Roc (Arabian) – Enormous legendary bird of prey

Shangyang (Chinese) – Rainbird

Shedu (Mesopotamian) – Male counterpart to Lamassu

Simurgh (Persian) – Phoenix-like bird of enormous size and great longevity and wisdom

Stymphalian birds (Greek) – Man-eating birds

Thoth (Ancient Egyptian) – Ibis-headed god of the moon, wisdom, and art

Three-legged bird (various cultures)

Thunderbird (Native American) – Legendary bird spirit that brings storms, found primarily among the cultures of the Pacific Northwest, but also the American Southwest, Great Lakes, and Great Plains

Turul (Hungarian) – Mythological bird of prey

Veðrfölnir (Norse) – Hawk that sits atop an eagle that rests atop the world tree, Yggdrasil

Vucub Caquix (Mayan) – Bird demon

Wampus Bird (Native American) – Giant heron with shell armor instead of feathers

Zhenniao (Chinese) – Poisonous bird

Avian Humanoids

Main article: List of avian humanoids

See also: Category:Avian humanoids

Alkonost (Slavic) – Female with body of a bird

Gamayun (Slavic) – Prophetic bird with woman's head

Gumyōchō (Yōkai) – Twin-headed human-bird

Harpy (Greek) – Ugly winged bird woman, steals food

Aello – Name meaning "storm"

Ocypete – Name meaning "swift wing"

Celaeno – Name meaning "the dark one"
Podarge – Name meaning "fleet-footed"
Horus (Ancient Egyptian) – Tutelary deity and god of the sky and kingship
Inmyeonjo (Korean) – Bird with a human face
Itsumade (Japanese) – Monstrous bird with a human face
Kalavinka (Buddhist) – Fantastical immortal creature with a human head and a bird's torso and long flowing tail
Karura (Japanese) – Divine creature with human torso and bird-like head
Kinnara (Buddhist) – Half-bird musicians
Lamassu (Mesopotamian) – Goddess with a human head, the body of a bull or a lion, and bird wings
Siren (Greek) – Bird-women known for their compelling singing
Achelois – Name meaning "she who drives away pain", surname for the daughters of Achelous
Aglaonoe – Daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore
Agalaope – Name meaning "with lambent voice", daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore
Leucosia – Name meaning "white", daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Terpsichore
Ligeia – Name meaning "clear-toned", daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Terpsichore
Parthenope – Name meaning "maiden-voiced", Daughter of Achelous and Terpsichore
Pisinoe – Daughter of Achelous and either Melpomene or Sterope
Thelxinoë – Name meaning "mind charming"
Swan maiden (Multi-cultural) – Shapeshifts from human to swan
Tengu (Japanese) – Has human and bird characteristics, name means "dog"
Chickens
See also: Category:Mythological galliforms
Alectryon (Greek) – Rooster charged with announcing the arrival of Helios
Basan (Japanese) – Fire-breathing chicken
Cockatrice – Chicken-headed dragon or serpent, visually similar to the Basilisk
Gallic rooster – Symbolic rooster used as an allegory for France
Gullinkambi – Rooster who lives in Valhalla in Norse mythology
Rooster of Barcelos – A mythological rooster from Portugal
Sarimanok (Philippine) – Legendary chicken of the Maranao people who originate from Mindanao
Víðópnir – Rooster that sits atop Yggdrasil in Norse mythology
Corvids
Main article: Cultural depictions of ravens
See also: Category:Mythological corvids
Badb (Irish) – War goddess who takes the form of a crow
Corone (Greek) – Woman turned into a crow to flee Poseidon
Huginn and Muninn (Norse) – Two ravens that serve as messengers
Kutkh (Indigenous Russian) – Raven spirit involved in the creation myth
Nachtkrapp (German) – Raven who kidnaps children out at night
Rainbow crow (Lenape (supposed)) – Crow who brought fire to earth

Raum (Demonology) – Demon crow and a great earl of Hell

Three-legged crow (East Asian) – Crow with three legs representing the sun

Yatagarasu (Shinto) – Three-legged crow

Tulugaak (Inuit) – Raven god and creator of light

Waang (Australian Aboriginal) – Trickster crow and culture hero

Eagles

See also: Category:Mythological birds of prey

Aethon (Greek) – Eagle tormentor of Prometheus

Griffin (Greek) – Guards treasure and priceless possessions

Hippogriff (Italian) – Winged horse with the head and upper body of an eagle

Huracán (Mayan) – Type of thunderbird that lives beneath the Gulf of Mexico.

Etymological origin of "hurricane"

Hræsvelgr (Norse) – Jötunn who takes the form of an eagle

Poukai (Māori) – Monstrous predatory bird, likely based on an extinct species

Shahbaz (Persian) – Eagle god who helped the Iranian peoples and guided the

Faravahar to the Iranian lands

Triple-headed eagle (multi-cultural) –

Wuchowsen - (Abenaki) One of the four wind spirits in Abenaki lore. Depicted as a giant eagle who lives atop a mountain.

Ziz (Jewish) – Giant griffin

Zu (Mesopotamian) – Divine monster depicted as a lion-headed eagle

Owls

See also: Category:Owls in culture

Chickcharney (Bahamas) – Magical owl with powers over fate, sometimes encountered by travellers in pine forests.

Nyctimene (Roman) – Princess transformed into an owl by Minerva.

Owlman (English) – Owl-like humanoid compared to America's Mothman

Sirin (Slavic) – Birds with women's heads who lured men to their deaths

Strix (Greek) – Owl that ate human flesh

Fish

See also: Category: Legendary fish

Fish People

Mermaid / Merman – half-human, half-fish (worldwide)

Water spirit – (worldwide)

Undine – water elementals in the alchemical writings of Paracelsus

Abaia

Gurangatch

Hippocamp

Ika-Roa

Il Belliegha - (Malta) Eel like monster with a frog tongue and a hand on the tip of its tail that eats children who get too close to open wells.

Isonade

Namazuo

Ningyo

Kun

Salmon of Wisdom

Shachihoko (Japanese) – a creature with the head of a tiger and the body of a carp
Mug-wamp - Canadian giant sturgeon monster said to inhabit Lake Temiskaming in Ontario. Name is of Native origin.

Mammals

Aquatic and marine-based

Aspidochelone (Greek) – Island sized whale mentioned in bestiaries

Bahamut (Arabic) – Whale monster whose body supports the earth. Word seems far more ancient than Islam and may have the same origin as the word Behemoth in modern Judeo-Christian lore

Bake-kujira (Japanese) – Ghost whale

Cetus (Greek) – A monster with the head of a boar or a greyhound, the body of a whale or dolphin, and a divided, fan-like tail

Devil Whale (English) – Whale capable of swallowing ships

Dobhar-chú (Scottish) – King otter

Encantado (Brazilian) – Shapeshifting trickster dolphins

Glashtyn (Celtic) – Horse goblin from the sea

Gveleshapi (Georgian) - Snake-whale monster associated with lakes, rivers and springs. Said to be causes of floods and other water related disasters

Lavellan (Scottish) – Water shrew or water vole with poisonous abilities, said to be able to injure cattle over a hundred feet away

Makara (Hindu mythology) – Half terrestrial animal in the frontal part (stag, deer, or elephant) and half aquatic animal in the hind part (usually of a fish, a seal, or a snake, though sometimes a peacock or even a floral tail is depicted)

Sea goat (Greek) – Half goat, half fish

Selkie (Scottish) – Shapeshifting seal people

Water bull (Scottish) – Nocturnal amphibious bull

Water Horse – General name for mythical water dwelling horses of many cultures

Ceffyl Dŵr (Welsh) – Water horse

Each-uisge (Scottish) – Malevolent shapeshifting oceanic water horse

Enbarr (Irish) – Manann's horse, capable of traversing land and sea

Hippocampus (Greek) – Horse with a fish tail

Ichthyocentaurs (Greek) – Upper body of a man, the lower front of a horse, tail of a fish

Kelpie (Scottish) – Water horse

Morvarc'h (Breton) – Legendary horse that could gallop on the waves

Nixie (Germanic) – Shapeshifting water being, known for appearing as horses

Nuckelavee (Orkadian) – Skinless oceanic water horse with pestilent breath

Nuggle (Scottish) – Mischievous male water horse

Tangie (Scottish) – Shapeshifting sea water horse

Bats

See also: Category:Bats in religion

Balayang (Australian Aboriginal) – Bat-god and brother to Bunjil

Camazotz (Mayan) – Bat spirit and servant of the lords of the underworld

Leutogi (Polynesian) – Samoan princess rescued by bats

Minyades (Greek) – Three sisters who refused to take part in the worship of Dionysus,

and turned into bats by Hermes

Tjinimin (Australian Aboriginal) – Ancestor of the Australian people

Vetala (Hindu) – Vampiric entity that takes over cadavers

Carnivorans

Bears

See also: Category:Mythological bears

Bjarndyrakongur (Icelandic) – King of bears. Stems from Polar Bear sightings in Iceland being extremely rare, but not unheard of. Has a shining horn on its head topped with a ball and red patches on cheeks

Bugbear (Celtic) – Child-eating hobgoblin

Callisto (Greek) – A nymph who was turned into a bear by Hera

Stiff-Legged Bear (Native American) – Gigantic, hairless bear monster in tribal folklore, predominantly Iroquoians and Algonquians, possibly inspired by mammoths

Canines

See also: Category:Mythological canines

Adlet (Inuit) – Tribe of hybrid dog people birthed from a woman who married her dog. Were banished for preying on humans.

Akhlut (Inuit) – Wolf-orca hybrid monster that hunts on both land and sea.

Amarok (Inuit) – Giant solitary wolf that hunts at night

Anubis (Egyptian) – Jackal-headed god associated with mummification and the afterlife

Aralez (Armenian) – Winged dogs that descend from heaven and resurrect fallen warriors by licking their wounds

Asena (Altai/Turkish) – She-wolf impregnated by mythical founder of a tribe called the Golturks. They came to Turkey from Altai in Siberia during the empire of Ghengis Khan

Axehandle hound (North American) – Axe-shaped dog that reputedly subsists on axe-handles left unattended

Black dog (British) – Also known as Barghest, Black Shuck, or Grim; associated with the Devil, Hellhound

Beast of Gévaudan (French) – Man-eating wolf, terrorized the province of Gévaudan

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a small, luminescent dog [2]

Cerberus (Greek, Roman) – Multi-headed dog, guards the gates of the Underworld, son/brother of Orthrus

Chupacabra (Latin American) – Alleged creature reputed to attack and drink the blood of livestock, occasionally described with bat-like features. Sometimes thought to resemble, or mistaken for a hairless coyote

Cu Sith or Cusith (Irish, Scottish, Hebridean) – A hellhound, a highland harbinger of death

Crocotta – Mythical dog-wolf that can imitate human voices, supposedly found in India or Ethiopia

Cynocephaly – Humanoids with the head of a dog or jackal

Dogs of Actaeon (Greek) – Hunting dogs that turned on Actaeon after he was turned into a deer

Failinis (Irish) – Legendary hound with a number of abilities

Fenrir (Norse) – Monstrous wolf destined to kill Odin

Gelert (Welsh) – Dog killed out of error by Welsh King, thinking it had murdered his

infant child

Hellhound (Worldwide) – Supernatural dogs, bringers of death

Huodou (Chinese) – a large black dog that can emit flames from its mouth

Hvcko Capko (Seminole) – Also Long Ears, Stinky Wolf. A horse sized wolf with extra large, pointed ears, a horse's tail and reeks of rot and death. Prolonged exposure to its stench causes deadly illness

Kludde (Belgium) – demon summoned from the ashes of witches taking the form of a black wolf with bat wings, a birds beak and bear claws. Has glowing eyes, shapeshifting abilities and great speed

Orthrus (Greek) – two headed dog, father/brother of Cerberus

Papa-mel or Papamel – Dog of the Amazonian Curupira

Penghou (Chinese) – tree spirit that appears like a black dog and tastes like dog-meat

Petitcrieu – Fairy dog in Tristan romance

Psoglav (Bosnia) – Humanoid monster with dog's head, horse's legs, one eye and iron teeth.

Salawa – the "Typhonian Animal," a slender, vaguely canine-animal that is the totemic animal of Set

Sigbin (Philippine) – is a creature in Philippine mythology

Shug Monkey – dog/monkey creature found in Cambridgeshire (Britain)

Tanuki (Japanese) – Japanese raccoon dog, legends claim is a shapeshifting trickster

Vǎrkolak, or "Vukodlak" (Slavic) – Undead vampire werewolf

Werewolf – human, shapeshifts to a wolf because of an affliction, lycanthrope (Worldwide)

Foxes

See also: Category:Mythological foxes

Aguara (Chané) – Trickster fox associate with the constellation Scorpius.

Amaterasu (Japanese) – Sun goddess who sometimes takes the form of a dragon-fox.

Tulikettu (Finnish) – Fox with flaming fur, whose skin is said to be a safer alternative for lighting than fire. Catching on in a hunt will guarantee riches. Gives name to the northern lights

Huli jing (Chinese) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Kitsune (Japanese) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Kumiho (Korean) – Fox spirits, like Fairies

Sky Fox (mythology) (Chinese) – Celestial nine-tailed Fox Spirit that is 1,000 years old and has golden fur

Felines

See also: Category:Mythological felines

Bael (Demonology) – First king of Hell with three heads: a man, a toad, and a cat

Ball-tailed cat (North American) – a feline similar to a mountain lion, except with a long tail with a bulbous end used for striking its prey

Cactus cat (North American) – a feline of the American Southwest with hair-like thorns that intoxicates itself by the consumption of cactus water

Canaima (Mexico) – Term for a sort of were-jaguar. May be related to skinwalkers

Cat-sith (Celtic mythology) – Spectral cat that haunts the Scottish Highlands

Cath Palug (Welsh) – Monstrous cat said to have killed 180 warriors

Carbuncle (Chilote) – One of its many descriptions is a cat with a luminescent chin [3]
Demon Cat (North American) – a ghost cat who is purported to haunt the government buildings of Washington, D.C.

Kaibyō (Japanese) – Various forms of cat Yōkai

Bakeneko (Japanese) – Two-tailed cat yōkai

Kasha (Japanese) – Corpse stealing yōkai, sometimes originating as a cat

Nekomata (Japanese) – Cat yōkai from both mountains and domestic areas

Nue (Japanese) – Hybrid of monkey, tiger, tanuki and snake. Considered a yokai

Panther (Greek) – Wildcat with multicolored hide. Attracts prey with sweet smelling breath and is often ridden by and associated with the god, Dionysus

Pard (Greek) – Early Greek understanding of a leopard. It was also surmised that cheetahs were a hybrid of a lion and a pard, hence calling those leopards instead of what we now call leopards

Phantom cat, Alien Big Cat (Modern, Worldwide) – Wildcat that seems to appear far beyond its native range by unknown circumstance

Blue Mountains panther (Australian) – Alleged unknown wildcats sighted in Australia

Glawackus (American) – Hybrid bear-panther-lion monster that sounds like a hyena and can erase the memory of those who look into its eyes

Tyger (English) – Heraldic being that looked like a cross between a lion, horse and wolf, said to be red and speckled

Underwater panther (Native American) – Shapeshifting being known by many names among tribes in Eastern US

Vapula (European, Christian, Demonology) – A demon with insight into mechanics and science which takes a winged lion form

Vassoko (Africa, Chad) – Cat the size of a horse with long fangs and burning eyes.

Always accompanied by an entourage of butterflies

Wampus cat (American) – Cat with six legs and a long tail; originally a man who was transformed into the creature by a curse

White Tiger (Chinese) – a Guardian Of The West cardinal point

Winged cat – Archaeological designation for depictions of any mythological creature that can fit that description

Lions

See also: Category:Mythological lions

Arimanius (Greek) – Minor lion-headed Greek god

Ammit (Egyptian) – Goddess with the forequarters of a lion, the hindquarters of a hippopotamus, and the head of a crocodile

Barong (Balinese) – Benevolent king of spirits

Beast of the First Kingdom (Christian) – A beast like a lion with eagle's wings seen in the Book of Revelations

Brunswick Lion (German) – Loyal companion of Henry the Lion after the two slew a dragon together

Chimera (Greek)

Chinese guardian lions (Chinese) – Statues depicted in pairs believed to be protectors

Komainu (Shinto)

Shisa (Ryukyuan)

Sin-you (Japanese)

Xiezhi (Chinese)

Dawon (Tibetan) – Mount of the goddess Durga

Egyptian lion gods – Lions were a symbol of warfare and most all of these gods were warriors

Aker – Earth and underworld god

Àmi-Pe – A lion god

Apedemak – Depicted as a figure with a male human torso and a lion head

Bast – Lioness goddess of fertility and protection against disease.

Hert-ketit-s

Huntheth – A lioness goddess

Ipy (goddess) – Head and feet of a lion, body of a hippo, arms of a human

Maahes – Name means "he who is true beside her"

Matit – A funerary cat goddess who had a cult center at Thinis

Mehit – Depicted as a reclining lioness with three bent poles projecting from her back

Menhit

Pakhet

Repyt

Sekhmet – Warrior goddess as well as goddess of healing

Seret – A lioness goddess possibly originally from Libya

Shesmetet

Taweret – Depicted as a hippopotamus with lion paws and crocodile tail

Tefnut –

Tutu – Body of a striding, winged lion, the head of a human, other heads of hawks and crocodiles projecting from the body, and the tail of a serpent

Urit-en-kru – A lioness headed hippopotamus goddess

Griffin (Europe)

Lamassu (Mesopotamian)

Lampago (Heraldic) – Mythical beast in the form of a "man-tiger or man-lion"

Leo (Greek) –

Lion of Cithaeron (Greek)

Nemean lion (Greek)

Lion of Al-lāt (Arabian) – Lion icon of Al-Lat

Manticore (Persian)

Manussiha (Burmese) – Statue with a human head and two lion hindquarters

Merlion (Singaporean) – Fish with a lion's head

Narasimha (Hindu) – Part-lion avatar of Vishnu

Nian (Chinese) – Flat-faced lion with the body of a dog and prominent incisors, warded away by New Year's celebrations

Nongshāba (Sanamahism) – Lion god who created the sun

Pixiu (Chinese) – Powerful, winged lions who protect Feng shui practitioners

Questing Beast (Arthurian) – Beast with the head and neck of a snake, the body of a leopard, the haunches of a lion, and the feet of a hart

Sea-lion (Heraldic) – A half-lion half-fish beast found in heraldry

Serpopard (Egyptian) – Lion/leopard body with a snake head.

Sharabha (Hindu) – Part lion, part bird-beast, with eight legs.
Simhamukha (Tibetan) – A wisdom dakini of the Dzogchen tradition with the head of a snow lion
Snow Lion (Tibetan) – Celestial animal of Tibet
Sphinx (Egyptian) –
Criosphinx (Egyptian) – Ram-headed sphinx
Gopaitioshah (Persian) – Winged bull or lion with human face
Hieracosphinx (Egyptian) – Has the head of a hawk and the body of a lion
Stratford Lyon
Tigris (Jewish) – Giant lion of the forest of Bei Ilai
Vaikuntha Chaturmurti (Hindu) – a four-headed aspect of the Hindu god Vishnu: a human head, a lion head, a boar head and a fierce head
Winged lion
Yali (Hindu) – Portrayed with the head and the body of a lion, the trunk and the tusks of an elephant, and sometimes bearing equine features
Yaghūth – A god of the era of the prophet Noah
Yaldabaoth (Gnostic) – Lion-headed serpent god.
Hyenas
Werehyena
Musteloids and non-hyena herpestoids
Azeban
Gef
Ichneumon
Kamaitachi
Kushtaka (Tlingit) – shapeshifting "land otter man"
Mujina
Ramidreju
Raijū
Procyonids
Azeban – trickster raccoon spirit in Abenaki mythology
Marsupials
See also: Category:Mythological marsupials
Drop bear
Bunyip (Australian Aboriginal)
Primates
See also: Category:Mythological monkeys
Agropelter – a beast that amuses itself by hurling twigs and tree branches at passersby (United States & Canada)
Bigfoot or Sasquatch – Cryptid, animal of the Northwest (North America)
Hibagon or Hinagon – ape-like, similar to Bigfoot, or the Yeti (Japan)
Jué yuán – blue-furred man-sized rhesus monkey that abducts human women (China & Japan)
Satori – mind-reading magical ape or monkey (Japan)
Shōjō – anthropomorphic spirit, depicted as furred, somewhat confounded with orangutan (Japan)

Shug Monkey – dog/monkey (Britain)

Sun Wukong (proper name) – powerful warrior-magician in the form of a monkey who hatched from a stone egg (China)

Vanara – humanoid apes or monkeys (India, Hindu)

Yeren – man-monkey, cryptid hominid, resides in remote mountainous (China)

Yeti – Abominable Snowman, ape-like cryptid similar to Bigfoot, that inhabits the Himalayas (Nepal, Tibet)

Yowie – hominid said to live in the Australian wilderness, a cryptid similar to the Himalayan Yeti (Australia)

Rabbits and hares

See also: Category:Mythological rabbits and hares

Al-Mi'raj – rabbit with unicorn horn (Arabia)

Jackalope – (North America)

Moon rabbit – a rabbit living on the moon (Chinese)

Skvader

Wisakedjak - (Native American) aka Whiskeyjack. One of several names for rabbit trickster spirit of the eastern woodlands and Great Plains

Wolpertinger

Rodents

See also: Category:Mythological rodents

Afanc

Lavellan (Scottish) – Water shrew or water vole with poisonous abilities, said to be able to injure cattle over a hundred feet away

Ratatoskr

Rat king; phenomenon in which a number of rats become intertwined at their tails (Germany, France)

Wolpertinger

Ungulates

Antelopes and deer

See also: Category:Mythological deer

Actaeon (Greek) – a hunter turned into a deer and torn apart by his dogs

Ceryneian Hind (Greek) – Artemis' large, sacred golden hind

Deer Woman (Native American) – female human above the waist, deer below. Male version is Elk Man.

Eikpyrnir (Norse mythology) – stag which stands upon Valhalla

Goldhorn (Slavic) – white golden-horned antelope

Jackalope (North American) – jackrabbit with antelope horns

Keresh (Jewish) – giant deer of the forest of Bei Ilai

Peryton (Argentina) – Stag that is part bird

Qilin (Chinese) – East Asian chimerical good-luck symbol

Tarand (European) also Parandrus. Antelope or deerlike creature said to be found in Ethiopia that can change the color of its fur at will to camouflage itself

White stag (worldwide) – magic white deer

Xeglun (Tungusic mythology) – celestial elk

Bovines

See also: Category:Mythological bovines

Auðumbla

Bai Ze

Kujata (Arabic) – Cosmic bull that bears the angel who holds the earth. Kujata, in turn, stands on Bahamhut.

Bicorn and Chichevache

Bonnacon

Hodag (American) – monster born of the cremated remains of an abused bull

Minotaur – monster with the head of a bull and the body of a man (Greek)

Nandi

Sarangay – a bull with a huge muscular body and a jewel attached to its ears (Philippines)

Shedu

Tē-gû – a giant buffalo living underground which causes earthquakes (Taiwan)

Ushi-oni – (Japan)

Camelids

Allocamelus – A donkey-headed camel.

Heavenly Llama[4]

Caprids

See also: Category:Mythological caprids

Amalthea

Aries

Barometz

Capricornus

Chimera

Dahu

Faun – a Roman version of satyr. It has a human head and torso and a goat waist and legs.

Goldhorn – also known as Zlatorog

Heiðrún – goat in Norse mythology, which produces mead for the einherjar

Khnum

Satyr – a goat legged human that is associated to the deity Dionysus. Known to be drunk partiers.

Sidehill gouger

Tanngrið and Tanngnjóstr – Thor's magical goats

Chrysomallos – a sheep with golden fleece from Greek mythology

Equines

Main articles: List of horses in mythology and folklore and List of winged horses

See also: Category:Horses in mythology

Anggitay – is a creature with the upper body of a female human and the lower body of a horse from waist down (Philippines)

Arion – Talking immortal horse (Greek)

Balius and Xanthus (Greek) – immortal offspring of harpies

Buraq – Al-Burāq, steed from the heavens that transported the prophets (Islam)

Centaur – head, arms, and torso of a human, the body and legs of a horse (Greek)

Cheval Gauvin – horse which tries to kill its rider (French/Swiss)
 Cheval Mallet; horse that tempts and kidnaps weary travelers (French)
 Chiron – centaur believed to be exceptional among his brethren (Greek)
 Chollima – a winged horse too swift to be mounted by any mortal (Chinese)
 Drapé - (France) Ghostly horse who spirits away children wandering at night to an unknown location, never to be seen again.
 Gytrash (English) – shapeshifting spirit usually taking the form of a horse, mule or other animal that appears to the lost and leads them to their destination
 Haizum – horse of the archangel Gabriel (Islam)
 Hippogriff – winged horse with the head and upper body of an eagle (French, English)
 Ipotane – half-horse, half-humans, original centaurs (Greek)
 Karkadann – monstrous, highly aggressive unicorn (India, Persia)
 Kotobuki (Japanese) – Yokai with traits of all members of the Chinese zodiac
 Longma – fabled winged horse with dragon scales (China)
 Mankayia (Kiowa) – tornado spirit in the form of a horse
 Onocentaur – part human, part donkey (Greek)
 Pegasus – winged white stallion (Greek)
 Pooka – spirits or fairies who lived near ancient stones; could be good or bad (Ireland)
 Sleipnir – Odin's eight-legged horse, which he rode to Hel (Norse)
 Simurgh – like the Hippogriff with the head of a human (Persian)
 Sihuanaba – shapeshifting spirit that typically appears as a beautiful, long-haired woman when seen from behind, before revealing her face to be that of a horse
 Tikbalang – creature with the body of a man and the head and hooves of a horse that lurks in the mountains and forests (Philippines)
 Uchchaihshravas – seven-headed flying white horse (Hindu)
 Unicorn – horse-like creature with a single horn, often symbolizing purity (worldwide)
 Winged unicorn
 Water Horse – general name for mythical water dwelling horses of many cultures
 Ceffyl Dŵr (Welsh) – water horse
 Each-uisge (Scottish) – Malevolent shapeshifting oceanic water horse
 Enbarr (Irish) – Manann's horse, capable of traversing land and sea
 Hippocampus (Greek) – Horse with a fish tail
 Ichthyocentaurs (Greek) – upper body of a man, the lower front of a horse, tail of a fish
 Kelpie (Scottish) – water horse
 Morvarc'h (Breton) – legendary horse that could gallop on the waves
 Nixie (Germanic) – Shapeshifting water being known for appearing as a horse
 Nuckelavee (Orkadian) – Skinless oceanic water horse with pestilent breath
 Nuggle (Scottish) – Mischievous male water horse
 Tangie (Scottish) – shapeshifting sea water horse
 White horse
 Pachyderms
 Main article: List of elephants in mythology and religion
 See also: Category:Mythological elephants
 Abath
 Baku

Behemoth

Quugaarpak - (Inuit) Explanation for Mammoths & other Ice Age remains washing out of riversides. Underworld monsters who dig their way up to the human world, but die upon breathing our air.

Taweret

Pigs and boars

See also: Category:Mythological pigs

Calydonian Boar

Erymanthian Boar

Zhu Bajie

Xenarthrans

Mapinguari

Molluscs

See also: Category:Mythological molluscs

Akkorokamui – octopus monster (Ainu, Japan)

Amikuk (Yup'ik) - Shapeshifting four armed 'octopus' that can swim through land as easily as water.

Carbuncle (Chilote) – one of its many descriptions is a luminescent bivalve[3][2]

Lou Carcolh – A giant, man-eating snail with fur and tentacles (France)

Kraken – squid monster (Worldwide)

Shen – A clam-dragon that creates mirages and fata morgana at sea (China)

Reptiles

Limbed

See also: Category:Legendary reptiles

Agoa (American) – turtle monster of West Virginian lore centered around the Monongahela River

Ammut – female demon, funerary deity and animal hybrid (Egypt)

Bakunawa – serpentine dragon in Philippines

Basilisk – king of serpents with the power to cause death with a single glance (Europe)

Black Tortoise – one of the four symbols of the Chinese constellations

Chalkydri

Chinese Dragon – serpentine creature with four legs

Cipactli – sea monster, part crocodile, fish and toad. Always hungry, thousands of mouths (Aztec)

Dragon – serpentine, reptilian traits (worldwide)

Dungavenhooter – a crocodilian creature with no mouth and huge nostrils who uses its tail to pound victims into a vapor, which it then inhales

Knucker – sea serpent-like dragon

Kurma

Loch Ness Monster – sea monster cryptid (Scotland)

Loveland frog – Humanoid cryptid (The United States (Ohio))

Luu – (Mongol) – serpentine water dragons capable of causing great floods if angered.

Makara

Mokele Mbembe

Mo'o (Hawaiian) class of shapeshifting lizard monsters

Morgawr (Cornish) – crocodilian sea serpent that affects fishing

Mungoon-Gali – a giant goanna (Australia)

Peluda

Reptilian humanoids

Sewer alligator

Sobek

Taniwha

Whowie – a giant frog-headed goanna with six legs (Australia)

Wyvern

Zaratan

Serpents and worms

See also: List of dragons in mythology and folklore, Category: Legendary serpents, and Serpents in the Bible

Alicante

Amphisbaena

Amphithere

Apep/Apophis

Azhi Dahaka

Basilisk

Bakonawa

Biscione

Cockatrice

Dragon

Drake

Echidna

Fáfnir

Feathered serpent

Garafena (Russian)

Gorgon

Hoop snake

Indus worm

Hydra

Jaculus/Jaculi

Jasconius

Jörmungandr — the Midgård serpent

Lamia

Lindworm

Madame White Snake

Meretseger

Mongolian Death Worm

Naga

Níðhöggr

Orm

Ouroboros

Python

Rainbow serpent
Sea serpent
Schießschlange
Tarasque
Tolba — the world turtle that supports North America upon its back
Tsuchinoko
Typhon
Ur
Wyvern
Yamata no Orochi
Zilant
Megafauna
Main article: List of megafauna in mythology and folklore
Giants
Main article: List of giants in mythology and folklore
Artificial creatures
This listing includes creatures that are man-made, mechanical or of alchemical origins.

Automaton (worldwide) – self-operating machine; most famous example is Greek mythology's Talos
Blodeuwedd (Welsh) – wife of Lleu Llaw Gyffes
Brazen head (Medieval legends) – living head of brass purported to be able to answer any question given to it
Doll Woman- (Lenape) lifelike doll spirit. Must stay properly appeased, or will cause mischief in the home.
Frankenstein's monster
Galatea (Greek) – ivory statue carved by Pygmalion
Gingerbread man – from German folk tales
Golem (Jewish) – animated humanoid construct
Homunculus (Alchemy) – diminutive, animated construct
Nephele (Greek) – nymph formed from a cloud by Zeus to resemble the goddess Hera
Shabti (Egyptian) – clay model used as workers
Tokeloshe (Zulu mythology) – diminutive, hairy humanoid with various magical powers
Tilberi (Iceland) – creations of witches from a rib bone and wool for the purpose of stealing milk
Tsukumogami (Japanese) – objects that come to life, of their own accord, after 100 years
Tulpa (Tibetan Buddhism) – creature brought to life through meditation
Tupilaq (Inuit) – large statues brought to life to serve witches and shamans
Ushabti (Egyptian) – clay guardians/assistants
Various objects animated by gods, demons and spirits in mythology, legend and folklore
Body parts, creatures associated with
Blood
See also: Category:Mythological hematophages
Alan

Chupacabra
Dhampir
Preta
Golden Hind
Kappa
Kekkai
Lamia
Manananggal
Mandurugo
Redcap
Rokurokubi
Sigbin
Vampire
Werewolf
Yuki-onna
Bone
Bloody Bones
Gashadokuro
Grim Reaper
Skeleton
Eye
Argus Panoptes
Basilisk
Catoblepas
Cockatrice
Cyclopes
Gorgon
Hitotsume-kozou
Lamia
Lynx
Mokumokuren
One-eyed

Main article: List of one-eyed creatures in mythology and fiction

Face

Asura

Deva / Devi

Noppera-bō

Hair

Futakuchi-onna

Harionago

Mavka

Medusa

Head

Further information: Polycephaly

Amphisbaena

Cerberus
Chimera
Chonchon
Double-headed eagle
Dullahan
Hekatonkheires
Kishi
Hydra
Lernaean Hydra
Nine-headed Bird
Nukekubi
Rokurokubi
Orthrus
Shesha
Penanggalan
Wanyūdō
Xing Tian
Yacuruna
Yamata no Orochi
Limbs
Asura (Indian)
Deva / Devi (Indian)
Hekatonkheires
Hinkypunk - (English) variation on Will o the wisp. A single, incorporeal leg hopping around bogs with a lantern.
Kui
O'nya:ten (Iroquoian) aka Dry Fingers. Mummified hand. Appears and leaps out at people after certain transgressions, such as speaking ill of the dead, or butting into other people's personal business.
Sleipnir
Three-legged bird
Mouth
Futakuchi-onna
Kuchisake-onna
Skin
Selkie
Skin-walker
Swan maiden
Tail
Bakeneko
Kitsune
Yamata no Orochi
Kumiho
Hulder
Nguruvilu

Neck
Serpopard
Rokurokubi
Vampire
Torso
Manananggal
Geryon[5]
Abdomen
Pixiu
Concepts, creatures associated with
Battle, Vengeance, Violence, and War
See also: Category:War deities
Androktasiai
Erinyes
Hipag
Hysminai
Keres
Lemures
Makhai
Onryō
Phonoi
Valkyrie
Vengeful ghost
Birth and Rebirth
See also: Category:Phoenix birds
Aralez
Phoenix
Ubume
Death and Immortality
See also: List of ghosts
See also the categories Undead and Personifications of death
Abasy
Ammit
Banshee
Demon
Devil
Dullahan
Ghost
Grim Reaper
Ox-Head and Horse-Face
Phoenix
Undead
Valkyrie
Vampire
Dream, the Mind, and Sleep

See also: Category:Sleep in mythology and folklore

Alp

Baku

Carbuncle

Devil

Drude

Incubus / Succubus

Mermaid

Nightmare

Nue

Oni

Sandman

Satori

Zduhać

Evil Eye and Sight

Alp (folklore)

Basilisk

Balor of the Evil Eye – king of the Fomorians, a race of giants, and a cyclops (Irish)

Catoblepas

Cockatrice

Gorgon – woman with hair made of living, venomous snakes, and eyes that turned men to stone (Greek):

Medusa – once a human, Medusa and her sisters were cursed to be terrible monsters by Athena (Greek)

Euryale – second eldest of the three vicious Gorgon sisters (Greek)

Stheno – eldest of the Gorgon Sisters (Greek)

Fertility and Human Sexuality

Alan

Boto

Faun

Gancanagh

German

Incubus / Succubus

Maenad

Nymph

Pombero

Popobawa

Satyr

Sileni / Silenus

Unicorn

Zemyna / Zemepatis

Simurgh

Fortune, Luck, and Wealth

Carbuncle (Chilote) – said to be the "guardian of the metals"[3]

Dwarf

Egbere
Genie
Leib-Olmai
Leprechaun
Matagot
Pixiu
Sarimanok
Sigbin
Yaksha / Yakshini
Light
Angel
Chalkydri
Deity
Lampetia
Will-o'-the-wisp
Dragon
Love and Romance
See also: Category:Love and lust gods
Cupid / Eros / Cherub
Gancanagh
Selkie
Swan maiden
Madame White Snake
Melusine
Tennin
Undine
Sound
Banshee
Encantado
Fenghuang
Fossegrim
Mermaid
Nue
Siren
Yamabiko
Speech
Main article: Talking animal
Gef
Satan
Time and Technology
See also: Category:Time and fate gods
Chronos
Father Time
Gremlin
Wisdom

Baba Yaga
Bai Ze
Griffin
Salmon of Wisdom
Sphinx
Demons
See list of theological demons
Elements, creatures associated with
Aether
Chalkydri
Deity
Elemental
Spirit
Angel
Demon
Devil
Yokai
Nymph
Elf
Fairy
Air and wind
See also: List of flying mythological creatures
Ala
Elemental
Feldgeister
Zduhać
Darkness
Black dog
Bogeyman
Enenra
Ghost
Grim Reaper
Wechuge
Wendigo
Shadow People
Vampire
Werewolf
Oni
Gashadokuro
Camazotz
Wild Hunt
Hell Hound
Earth and subterranean
See also: Category:Earth spirits
Asag

Bluecap
Elemental
Dwarf
Earth Dragon
Gargoyle
Giant
Gnome
Goblin
Golem
Knocker (folklore)
Monopod
Nymph
Ogre
Oread
Ten Ten-Vilu
Troll
Fire
Further information: Fire-breathing monster
Basan
Bluecap
Cherufe
Chimera
Dragon
Elemental
Enenra
Ifrit
Hellhound
Lampad
Phoenix
Salamander
Light and rainbow
Angel
Chalkydri
Light Elf
Rainbow crow
Rainbow Serpent
Metal and gold
Alicanto[1]
Pixiu
Carbunclo[3]
Chrysomallos
Cyclopes
Griffin
Gnome
Leprechaun

Bulgasari
Thunder and lightning
Chinese dragon
Cyclopes
Feldgeister
Kitsune
Raijū
Thunderbird
Valkyrie
Water

See also the categories Mythological water creatures and Water spirits

Afanc
Amefurikozō
Aspidochelone
Bloody Bones
Buggane
Bunyip
Camenae
Capricorn
Cetus
Charybdis
Chinese Dragon
Cai Cai-Vilu
Crinaeae
Davy Jones' Locker
Draug
Each uisge
Elemental
Fish People
Fossegrim
Fur-bearing trout
Gargouille
Grindylow
Haetae
Hippocamp
Hydra
Ichthyocentaur
Jasconius
Jengu
Kappa
Kelpie
Kraken
Lake monster
Lavellan
Leviathan

Loch Ness monster

Lorelei

Lusca

Makara

Melusine

Mami Wata

Mermaid / Merman

Marrow

Morgens

Muc-sheilch

Naiad

Näkki

Nereid

Nix

Nymph

Pisces

Ponaturi

River gods

Rusalka

Samebito

Sea monster

Sea serpent

Selkie

Shen

Siren

Taniwha

Tiamat

Triton

Ondine

Vodyanoy

Water dragon

Water leaper

Water sprite

Yacuruna

Zaratan

Habitats, creatures associated with

Cave and underground

Dwarf

European dragon

Gnome

Goblin

Golem

Grootslang

Leprechaun

Troll

Yaoguai
Celestial and heaven
Angel
Chalkydri
Deva / Devi
Feathered serpent
Heavenly Llama[4]
Pegasus
Grim Reaper
Swan Maiden
Tennin
Three-legged bird
Valkyrie
Desert
Amphisbaena
Basilisk
Cockatrice
Ghoul
Mongolian Death Worm
Sphinx
Temperate forest and woodland
See also: Category:Forest spirits
Äbädä (Turkic) – forest spirit with shoes on the wrong feet
Ajatar
Bigfoot
Dryad
Elf
Green Man
Irrwurz
Leshy
Lindworm
Mavka
Moss people
Owlman
Satyr
Unicorn
Tropical forest and jungle
Curupira
Dingonek
Mapinguari
Manticore
Saci
Temperate grassland and garden
Fairy
Gnome

Savanna
Ennedi tiger
Werehyena
Lake and river
See also: Category:Lake monsters
Ahuitzotl
Bak
Bunyip
Chinese dragon
Dobhar-chú
Encantado
Grootslang
Iara
Jiaolong
Kappa
Kelpie
Lake monster
Hydra
Loch Ness Monster
Mizuchi
Mugwump
Naiad
Nixie
Ogopogo
Ondine
Rainbow serpent
Rusalka
Ryujin
Shellycoat
Warlock
Yacuruna
Mountain and hill
See also: Category:Mining spirits
Alp
Dwarf
Fenghuang
Griffin
Hippogriff
Mountain Giant
Kamaitachi
Mavka
Oread
Patupaiarehe
Rübezahl
Satyr

Tengu
Yeti
Sea
See also: Sea monster and Greek sea goddesses
Amikuk
Aspidochelone
Bishop-fish
Charybdis
Cai Cai-Vilu
Dragon King
Fish People
Hippocamp
Leviathan
Jormungand
Kraken
Mermaid / Merman
Nereid
Sea monk
Sea serpent
Selkie
Shen
Siren
Tritons
Umibōzu
Water Dragon
Yacuruna
Swamp and marsh
See also: Category:Swamp monsters
Błudnik
Bunyip
Grootslang
Lernaean Hydra
Honey Island Swamp monster
Mokele-mbembe
Swamp monster
Will-o'-the-wisp
Volcano and lava
Cherufe
Phoenix
Salamander
Polar, ice, and winter
Akhlut
Amarok
Hrimthurs
Ijiraq

Jotun
Qiqirn
Saumen Kar
Tizheruk
Wechuge
Wendigo
Yeti
Ymir
Yuki-onna
Frau Holle
Urban and house
Main article: Household deity
See also: Category:Household deities
Banshee
Boggart
Brownie
Domovoi – Slavic house spirit
Dvorovoi – Slavic yard spirit
Duende
Jinn
Kobold
Tomte
Vampire
Zashiki-warashi
Underworld and hell
See also: Category:Underworld deities

Cerberus
Ammit
Cerberus
Cyclopes
Demon
Devil
Earth Dragon
Garm
Hekatonkheires
Hellhound
Ifrit
Ox-Head and Horse-Face
Preta
Humanoids
See Mythic humanoids
Hybrids
See List of hybrid creatures
Astronomical objects, creatures associated with

Sun

Chalkydri beings from the Second Book of Enoch[6]

Kua Fu a giant in China

Three-legged bird in China, Korea, and Japan

Phoenix in Greek Mythology

Moon

Jade rabbit

Werewolf

Werejaguar

Alien

Constellation

Azure Dragon

Black Tortoise

Capricorn

Centaur

Heavenly Llama[4]

Ladon

Nemean Lion

Pegasus

Phoenix

Vermilion Bird

Yellow Dragon

White Tiger

World

See also: List of mythological places

World Elephant

World Tree

World Turtle

Creatures associated with plants

See also: Category:Trees in mythology

Alraune

Clickbok Tree- (American) An oak tree planted by a slave which later comes to life to protect his wife and son from a vengeful slave overseer.

Dryad

Ghillie Dhu

Green Man

Hamadryad

Jubokko

Kodama

Leshy

Mandrake

Penghou

Snake Tree- (Lakota) Tree brought to life by a witch. Lashes out at anything that comes close with branches covered in poisonous thorns that paralyze the victim.

Spriggan

Tree of life
Vampire pumpkins and watermelons (Romani)
Vegetable Lamb of Tartary
Zapam Zucum
Zaqqum
See Trees in mythology
Shapeshifters
Main article: List of shapeshifters
Creatures associated with times
Day and diurnal
Griffin
Jackalope
Unicorn (rather resembles the moon)
Wolpertinger
Night and nocturnal
Amarok
Bigfoot
Ennedi tiger
Ghoul
Owlman
Werewolf
Vampire
Undead
See also: Undead and Category:Ghosts
Aswang
Banshee – (Scottish, Gaelic, Irish)
Chindi - (Navajo) The dark side of the soul which has the ability to remain behind in the earth after death and become a sort of dark spirit.
Drekavac (Croatia) Name used for several distinct undead monsters.
Ghost – (Worldwide)
Inipi- (California Native) shapeshifting ghosts
Jikininki
Kuchisake-onna
Lugat (Albanian)
Poltergeist – (Worldwide)
Preta
Revenant
Sluagh
Spirit – (Worldwide)
Tei Pai Wanka - (Wampanoag) Term for swamp lights in Algonquian lore. Enslaved souls of people taken by the Little People who are used to scare people who've done wrong or lure them to their deaths.
Wanagi- (Lakota) Lakota name for Siouan shadow people. Essentially ghosts.
Wewe Gombel
Wili

Will o' the wisp – Jack o lantern (English)

Wraith

Yurei

Ghosts in Hindu Mythology: Bhoot, Baital and Pishacha

Corporeal

See also: List of vampires in folklore and mythology and Category: Corporeal undead

Draugr

Fext

Ghoul

Jiangshi

Lich

Manananggal

Mullo (Romani) variation on a vampire.

Mummy (undead) (modern interpretation)

Myling

Nukekubi

Pontianak

Skeleton

Vampire

Zombie

Miscellaneous

Anaye - (Navajo) various monsters that take the forms of animals, living objects and other things. Derived from a time when men and women bet on who would last the longest without the other sex and the women pleasuring themselves with whatever random things they thought would do the job, which caused their chosen toys to father them monstrous, man-eating children.

Daimon

Demon

Fairy

Familiar

Genie – or Jinn, Djinn

Monster

Sprite

Yōkai

References

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Alicanto". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. pp. 47–48. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

Quintana Mansilla, Bernardo. "El Carbunco". *Chiloé mitológico* (in Spanish).

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Carbunclo". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. p. 130. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

Montecino Aguirre, Sonia (2015). "Llamas". *Mitos de Chile: Enciclopedia de seres, apariciones y encantos* (in Spanish). Catalonia. p. 415. ISBN 978-956-324-375-8.

"Geryon". *Theoi*. Retrieved 10 February 2017. a three-bodied, four-winged giant

Platt, Rutherford (1926). *The Lost Books of the Bible and the Forgotten Books of Eden*.

Entry: The Book of the Secrets of Enoch chapter XII

vte

Lists of fictional life forms

Plants

Plants

Animals

Animal superheroesArthropodsFishInvertebratesParasitesWorms

Amphibians

Frogs and toads

Reptiles

CrocodiliansDinosaursSnakesTurtles

Birds

Birds of preyDucks animationPenguins

Mammals

Canines

AnimationComicsLiteratureDogs prose and poetrycomicslive-action filmlive-action televisionanimationanimated filmanimated televisionvideo gamesFoxesWolves

Felines

AnimationComicsFilmLiteratureTelevisionBig cats animation

Rodents

AnimationComicsLiterature

Non-human primates

AnimationComicsFilmLiteratureTelevision

Ungulates

AnimationHorsesLiteraturePachydermsPigs

Miscellaneous

BatsBearsCetaceansMarsupialsMusteloidsPinnipedsRabbits and haresRhinogradentia

Humanoids

General

ComicsFilmLiteratureTelevisionVideo games

Specific

AlienAquaticAvianReptilianSquid-faced

Other

ExtraterrestrialsParasitesSymbionts

Legendary

Fictional dragons popular culturefilm and televisiongamesliteratureFictional ghostsFictional mermaidsFictional vampiresFictional werewolves

Theological

Fictional angelsFictional demonsFictional deities

Related

CryptidsLegendary creaturesDragons in mythology and folkloreEquines Winged horsesWinged unicornsGiantsHybridsVampires by region

Categories: Lists of legendary creaturesMythology-related lists

This page was last edited on 13 December 2025, at 13:28 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and

Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

List of mythological places

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia



This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

Find sources: "List of mythological places" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (March 2020) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

This is a list of mythological places which appear in mythological tales, folklore, and varying religious texts.

Egyptian mythology

Name	Description
------	-------------

Aaru	The heavenly paradise often referred to as the Field Of Reeds, is an underworld realm where Osiris rules in ancient Egyptian mythology.
------	---

Akhet	An Egyptian hieroglyph that represents the sun rising over a mountain. It is translated as "horizon" or "the place in the sky where the sun rises". ^[1]
-------	--

Benben	The mound that arose from the primordial waters Nu upon which the creator deity Atum settled in the creation myth of the Heliopolitan form of ancient Egyptian religion.
--------	--

Duat	The Underworld and abode of the dead in Ancient Egyptian religion.
------	--

The Indestructibles	Two bright stars which, at that time, could always be seen circling the North Pole by ancient Egyptian astronomers. ^[2]
---------------------	--

Land of Manu Western abode of the sun god Ra.[3]

Nun The primordial waters from which the Benben arose at the beginning of the universe, also considered to be a god Nu.

Greek mythology

Name Description

Arcadia A vision of pastoralism and harmony with nature, derived from the Greek province Arkadia which dates to antiquity.

Asphodel Meadows The section of the underworld where ordinary souls were sent to live after death.

Atlantis The legendary (and almost archetypal) lost continent that was supposed to have sunk into the Atlantic Ocean.

Cloud cuckoo land A perfect city between the clouds in the play The Birds by Aristophanes.

Chryse and Argyre A pair of legendary islands, located in the Indian Ocean and said to be made of gold (chrysos) and silver (argyros).

Elysium (Elysian Fields) In Greek mythology, the final resting place of the souls of the heroic and the virtuous.

Fortunate Isles (Islands of the Blessed) Islands in the Atlantic Ocean, variously treated as a simple geographical location and as a winterless earthly paradise inhabited by the heroes of Greek mythology.

Garden of the Hesperides The sacred garden of Hera from where the gods got their immortality.

Hyperborea Home of the Hyperboreans in the far north of Greece or southern Europe.

Laistrygon Home to a tribe of giant cannibals that Odysseus encountered on his way back home from the Trojan War.

Meropis A gigantic island created purely as a parody of Plato's Atlantis.

Mount Olympus "Olympos" was the name of the home of the Twelve Olympian gods of the ancient Greek world.[4]

Nysa A beautiful valley full of nymphs.

Okeanos The cosmic river encircling the Earth in Ancient Greek cosmology, also sometimes depicted as one of the Titan gods.

Panchaia (Pangaia) A group of islands South of the Arabian peninsula inhabited by several tribes and rich with scented oils. Assumed by some to be the birthplace of the Olympian gods.

Tartaros A pit in the underworld for condemned souls.

Themiskyra The capital city of the Amazons in Greek mythology.

The Underworld Comprising the realms of The Elysium Fields, The Asphodel Meadows and Tartarus.

Norse mythology

Name Description

Alfheim The Land of elves in Norse mythology.

Asgard The high placed city of the gods, built by Odin, chief god of the Norse pantheon.

Biarmaland A geographical area around the White Sea in the northern part of (European) Russia, referred to in Norse sagas.

Fositesland The kingdom of Forseti, the god of Justice.

Gjöll A river that separates the living from the dead in Norse mythology.

Hel (heimr) The underworld in Norse mythology.

Hvergelmir A major spring in Norse mythology.

Jotunheim Land of the giants in Norse mythology.[5]

Kvenland A geographical area referred to in several medieval texts as well as in Norse sagas. The exact location of Kvenland is unknown, though, with several competing theories placing it in either the northern part of the Scandinavian Peninsula or the southwestern part of what is now Finland.

Mímisbrunnr A well associated with the being Mímir, located beneath the world tree Yggdrasil.

Muspelheim Land of fire in Norse mythology.

Niflheim World of cold in Norse mythology.

Niflhel Cold underworld in Norse mythology.

Norumbega A legendary settlement in northeastern North America, connected with attempts to demonstrate Viking incursions in New England.

Svartálfaheimr The land of the Dark Elves in Norse mythology.

Urðarbrunnr A well in Norse mythology.

Valhalla (from Old Norse Valhöll "hall of the slain") is a majestic, enormous hall located in Asgard, ruled over by the god Odin.

Vanaheimr The Land of the Vanir, another tribe of gods, according to Norse legends.

Yggdrasil An immense and central sacred tree in Norse cosmology.

Polynesian and Māori mythology

Name Description

Rarohenga A Māori spirit world for those who favor Papatūānuku The Earth Mother.

Toi O Nga Rangi The Māori spirit world for those who favor Ranginui The Sky Father. Sometimes known as the Sky World or the Summit Of The Heavens

Ao The Polynesian realm of light.

Te Po Polynesian realm of darkness and ancestors.

Hawaiki A mostly universal belief among Oceanian cultures of a realm where all Polynesians descend, particularly the Māori. Not to be confused with the Islands of Hawaii.

Cape Reinga/Te Rerenga Wairua Believed by Māori to be the place where spirits are required to journey through to reach the afterlife.

Indian mythology

Name Description

Amaravati Capital of Svarga, the abode of the devas, ruled by Indra.[6]

Ayodhya An important river in Ayyavazhi mythology.

Brahmaloka The abode of Brahma, the Hindu god of creation.

Himavanta A legendary forest that locates at the hill of the Himalayas.

Jambudvīpa Name for the terrestrial universe in Hindu, Buddhist, and Jain traditions.

Kailasha The celestial abode of Shiva.

Ketumati A pure land belonging to Maitreya within Buddhism.[7]

Kshira Sagara A divine ocean of milk in Hindu mythology.

Manidvīpa The abode of the supreme goddess in Hinduism.

Mayasabha A legendary palace located in Indraprastha, as described in Mahabharata

Mount Mandara A sacred mountain mentioned in the Puranas.

Mount Meru The sacred five-peaked mountain of Hindu, Jain, and Buddhist cosmology. It is considered to be the center of all the physical, metaphysical, and spiritual universes.

Naraka A realm resembling Hell in Indian religions where souls are temporarily punished before reincarnation.

Nirvana The ultimate state of soteriological release (liberation from repeated rebirth) commonly associated with Hinduism, Jainism, and Buddhism.

Patala The netherworld of Indian religions.

Pialral A heaven for great achievers of the Mizo Tribes of Northeast India.

Samavasarana Meeting place of the tirthankaras in Jainism.

Sanzu River A mythological river in Japanese Buddhism.

Shakadvipa A land mass west of the Ural Mountains in Hindu mythology.

Shambhala In Tibetan Buddhist tradition, a kingdom hidden somewhere in the Himalayas; Theosophists regard it as the home on the etheric plane of the governing deity of the earth, Sanat Kumara.

Siddhashila The place where souls who have escaped the cycle of reincarnation and attained moksha go according to the cosmology of Jainism.

Svarga The abode of the devas in Hinduism.

Tripura three cities or fortresses, is described in Hindu mythology as being constructed by the great Asura architect Mayasura

Thuvairaiyam Pathi In Ayyavazhi mythology, it was a sunken island some 240 km (150 miles) off the south coast of India.

Trāyastriṃśa An important world of the devas in the Buddhist cosmology.

Urdhvaloka Seven upper worlds mentioned in the Puranas.

Uttarakuru Name of a continent (dvipa) in Indian religions.

Vaikuntha The celestial abode of Vishnu.[8]

Vaitarani River situated in hell mentioned in the Garuda Purana and various other Hindu religious texts.

Chinese folk mythology

Name	Description
Diyu	The realm of the dead or Hell in Chinese mythology.
Eight Pillars	A concept from Chinese mythology located in the eight cardinal directions, they are a group of eight mountains or pillars which have been thought to hold up the sky.
Feather Mountain	One of many important mythological mountains in Chinese mythology, particularly associated with the Great Flood.
Fusang	A mysterious land to the east in Chinese legends.
Jade Mountain	A mythological mountain in Chinese mythology and the residence of The Queen Mother of the West.[9]
Kunlun Mountain	A place where immortals lived according to Chinese mythology.
Longmen	A legendary waterfall in Chinese mythology.
Mount Buzhou	An ancient Chinese mythological mountain which, according to old texts, lay to the northwest of the Kunlun Mountains, in a location today referred to as the Pamir Mountains.

Mount Penglai A legendary mountain in Chinese mythology, said to be situated on an island in the Bohai sea, home to Taoist immortals.

Moving Sands One of the obstacles the fictional version of the monk Xuanzang and companions must cross over on their mission to fetch the Buddhist scriptures from India and return them to Tang China.

Red River One of the mythological rivers said to flow from Kunlun, a mythological land, with mountainous features.

Shangri-La A mystical, harmonious valley enclosed in the western end of the Kunlun Mountains, described in the 1933 novel *Lost Horizon* by English author James Hilton.

Weak River One of the mythological rivers flowing near Kunlun, home of a Western Paradise.

Shangdu (Xanadu) The summer capital of Kublai Khan's Yuan empire became a mythological place and a metaphor for splendor and opulence, popularised by the 1816 poem *Kubla Khan* by Samuel Taylor Coleridge.

Abrahamic mythology

Name Description

Antillia An island from an old Iberian legend set during the Muslim conquest of Hispania. The legend says that during this time seven Christian Visigothic bishops, who were fleeing Muslim Conquerors, embarked with their flocks on ships and set sail westwards into the Atlantic Ocean, leading them to an island (Antillia or Isle Of Seven Cities) where they founded seven settlements.

As-Sirāt The bridge which every human must pass on the Yawm al-Qiyamah ("Day of Resurrection") to enter Paradise according to Islam.

Barzakh A place separating the living from the hereafter or a phase/"stage" between an individual's death and their resurrection in "the Hereafter".[10][11][12][13][14]

Bethulia A city whose deliverance by Judith, when besieged by Holofernes, forms the subject of the Book of Judith.

Brig of Dread A bridge to Purgatory that a dead soul had to cross.

Garden of Eden A paradise where humans were first created according to Abrahamic religions and resided until cast out for disobeying God.

Gog and Magog Are mentioned in the Bible and the Quran both as tribes and as their land.

Heaven In Abrahamic religions, the paradise where good people who have died continue to exist.

Hell In some Abrahamic religions, a realm in the afterlife in which evil souls are punished after death.

Hitfun A great dividing river separating the World of Darkness from the World of Light in Mandaeen cosmology.[15]

Iram of the Pillars The lost city mentioned in the Quran.

Jabulqa and Jabulsa Two cities mentioned in Shi'i hadith.

Kingdom of Prester John Legendary powerful Christian nation just beyond the Muslim world in medieval romantic literature, first located in South Asia, then Central Asia, then East Africa.

Kolob An astronomical body (star or planet) said to be near the throne of God in

Mormon cosmology.

Malakut A proposed invisible realm, featuring in Islamic cosmology.

Matarta A "station" or "toll house" that is located between the World of Light (alma d-nhūra) from Tibil (Earth) in Mandaean cosmology.

Mount of the Temptation The legendary location of Jesus Christ's Temptation, traditionally placed at Jebel Quruntul or 'Ushsh el-Ghurab near Jericho in the West Bank

Nbu The Mandaic name for the planet Mercury.

Pandæmonium The capital of Hell in John Milton's Paradise Lost.

Piriawis The sacred life-giving river (yardna) of the World of Light in Mandaean cosmology.

Pleroma Abode of the holy aeons in Gnosticism.

Scholomance A legendary school of black magic run by the Devil himself, located in Hermannstadt (now: Sibiu, Romania). Located in the mountains, south of the city Sibiu, near an unnamed lake.

Siniawis A region in the World of Darkness or underworld.[16]

Yardna A body of flowing fresh water that is suitable for ritual use as baptismal water in Mandaism.[17]

Zarahemla A civilization which was constructed in the ancient Americas, according to Mormon belief.

Zerzura Saharan city known as the "oasis of little birds" rumored to be full of treasure.

Celtic mythologies

Name Description

Annwn The "otherworld" of Welsh mythology.

Avalon Legendary Island of Apples, believed by some to be the final resting place of King Arthur.

Camelot The city in which King Arthur reigned.

Cantre'r Gwaelod A legendary ancient sunken kingdom said to have occupied a tract of fertile land lying between Ramsey Island and Bardsey Island.

Celliwig The earliest named location for the court of King Arthur.

Brasil or Hy-Brasil A mythical island to the west of Ireland.

Dinas Affaraon/Ffaraon Legendary site of King Lludd Llaw Eirant's defeat and binding of two dragons. In Lludd and Llefelys it is claimed to be the original placename of Dinas Emrys.

Emain Ablach A mythical island paradise in Irish mythology.

Fintan's Grave A mythological cave on the Irish mountain (now hill) Tul Tuinde[18]

Four Treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann (Gorias, Finias, Murias, and Falias) In Irish Mythology the Tuatha Dé Danann get their four magical treasures from four legendary cities: Gorias in the east; Finias, in the south; Murias in the west; and Falias in the north.

Lyonesse A country in Arthurian legend, which is said to border Cornwall in England.

Mag Mell A mythical underworld plain in Irish mythology, achievable only through death or glory. Meaning 'plains of joy', Mag Mell was a hedonistic and pleasurable paradise, usually associated with the sea.

Rocabarraigh A phantom island in Scottish Gaelic mythology.

Tech Duinn A mythological island to the west of Ireland where souls go after death.

Tír fo Thuinn A Celtic Otherworld in Irish mythology, a kingdom under the sea.

Tír na nÓg The Celtic Otherworld in Irish mythology.

Ys A city located in Brittany, France that was supposedly built below sea level, and demolished when the Devil destroyed the dam protecting it.

Others

Name Description

Abya Yala "saved land", is the name used by the Guna people.

Adiri Afterlife in Kiwai mythology.[19]

Adlivun, Adliparmiut, and Qudlivun Afterlives in Central Inuit mythology. Adlivun and Adliparmiut are described as lands of misery, whereas Qudlivun is a land of happiness.[20]

Akilineq Legendary location in Inuit mythology, believed to either be entirely mythical, or possibly Labrador Peninsula, Baffin Island, or even Iceland.

Alatyr A sacred stone, the "father to all stones", the navel of the earth, containing sacred letters and endowed with healing properties in East Slavic legends.

Alomkik A place accessible to the Abenaki peoples' mythological protector Pamola, where he holds those who trespass on Maine's Mount Katahdin.

Altjira A legendary era accessible during dreamtime in many Australian Aboriginal beliefs.

al-Wakwak Island of tree growing little children.

Axis mundi The center of the world or the connection between Heaven and Earth in various religions and mythologies.

Aztlán Legendary original homeland of the Mexica people in Mexica/Aztec mythology.

Bald Mountain A location in Slavic folk mythology related to witchcraft.

Baltia An island of amber somewhere in northern Europe.

Biringan city A mythical city that is said to invisibly lie between Gandara, Tarangnan, and Pagsanghan in Samar province of the Philippines. Biringan means "the black city" or the city of the Unknown in Waray.

Brittia A mythical island off the coast of Austrasia.

Buyan A mysterious island with the ability to appear and disappear using tides in Russian mythology.

Chinvat Bridge The sifting bridge,[21] which separates the world of the living from the world of the dead in Zoroastrianism.

City of the Caesars A city between a mountain of gold and another of diamonds supposed to be situated in Patagonia.

Cockaigne In medieval mythology,[which?] it is a land of plenty where want does not exist.

Domdaniel Cavernous hall at the bottom of the ocean where evil magicians, spirits, and gnomes meet.

El Dorado Rumored city of gold in South America.[22]

Empire of Kitara Legendary ancient empire in Western Region, Uganda

Fountain of Youth A place, detailed in many legends around the world, where one may drink of or bathe in its waters to restore their youth.

Fiddler's Green In 19th-century English maritime folklore, it was a kind of after-life

for sailors who had served at least fifty years at sea.

Hara Berezaiti A legendary mountain around which the stars and planets revolve from the ancient Zoroastrian scriptures of the Avesta.

Hubur A Sumerian term meaning "river", "watercourse" or "netherworld".

Irkalla The underworld from which there is no return in Babylonian mythology.

Kalunga line A watery boundary between the world of the living and the dead in religious traditions of the Congo region.

Karshvar Legendary continents according to Avesta.

Kingdom of Opona A mythical kingdom in Russian folklore.

Kingdom of Reynes A country mentioned in the Middle English romance King Horn.

Kingdom of Saguenay According to the French, an Iroquoian story of a kingdom of blonde men rich in gold and fur that existed in northern Canada prior to French colonization.

Kitezh A legendary city beneath the waters of Lake Svetloyar.

Kyöpelinvuori (Finnish for ghosts' mountain), in Finnish mythology, is the place which dead women haunt.

La Canela Also known as the Valley of Cinnamon, is a legendary location in South America.

La Ciudad Blanca "The White city", a legendary city of Honduras.

Lake Parime An enormous lake in northeastern South America, supposedly the site of El Dorado.

Land of Darkness A mythical land supposedly enshrouded in perpetual darkness.

Lemuria A hypothetical "lost land" variously located in the Indian and Pacific Oceans.

Lintukoto In Finnish mythology, a paradise-like place where birds migrate every winter; because it was located near the edge of the sky dome, the sky was very close to the ground and therefore its inhabitants were dwarves.

Lost City of Z An indigenous city that Col. Percy Harrison Fawcett believed had existed in the jungle of the Mato Grosso state of Brazil.

Lukomorye An ancient region in Russian lands.

Mahoroba A far-off land full of bliss and peace, similar to Arcadia.

Mictlan The afterworld of the Mexica.

Mu A hypothetical continent that allegedly disappeared at the dawn of human history.

Nibiru A mythological planet described by the Babylonians.

Onigashima A mythical island of oni visited by the character Momotarō in Japanese folklore.

Paititi A legendary Inca lost city or utopian rich land said to lie east of the Andes.

Pohjola The realm of Louhi in Finnish mythology, literally translated its name means "North".

Quivira and Cíbola Two of the legendary Seven Cities of Gold supposed by Spanish conquistadors to have existed in the Americas.

Ryūgū-jō The undersea palace of Ryūjin, the dragon kami of the sea.

Section 37 Paul Bunyan's legendary camp. So large that it took half a day to walk around, with the kitchen itself being two-mile (3.2 km) long with nine cooks and seventy-five flunkies in its early days.[23]

Sierra de la Plata (Spanish: Silver Mountains), was a legendary treasury of silver that was believed to be located in South America.

Silat Bridge The Silat Bridge is a bridge in Lalish, Iraq that leads to the most holy Yazidi shrine in Yazidism.

Suddene A country found in the Middle English romance King Horn.

Summerland The name given by Theosophists, Wiccans and some earth-based contemporary pagan religions to their conceptualization of an (mostly pastoral) afterlife.

Takama-ga-hara The dwelling place of the Shinto kami.

Thule An island somewhere in the belt of Scandinavia, northern Great Britain, Iceland, and Greenland.

Vineta A mythical city at the southern coast of the Baltic Sea.

Vyraj A mythical place in Slavic mythology, where "birds fly for the winter and souls go after death".

Westernesse A country found in the Middle English romance King Horn.

Xibalba The underworld in Mayan mythology.

Yomi The land of the dead according to Shinto mythology, as related in the Kojiki.

Yomotsu Hirasaka A slope or boundary between this world, where the living live, and the other world, where the dead live (Yomi).

Zabag Former kingdom in Southeast Asia.

References

Gardiner, Alan H. (1957). *Egyptian grammar : being an introduction to the study of hieroglyphs*. 1969 printing (3rd ed.). London: Published on behalf of the Griffith Institute, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford, by Oxford University Press. p. 489. ISBN 9780900416354. OCLC 229894.

Curtis, Anthony R. "Space Today Online -- Solar System Planet Earth -- Ancient Astronomy". spacetoday.org. Retrieved 2018-03-17.

Massey, Gerald (2014) [First published 1907]. *Ancient Egypt - Light Of The World*. Vol. 1. Jazzybee Verlag. p. 465. ISBN 978-3-8496-4444-4.

Wilson, Nigel (31 October 2005). *Encyclopedia of Ancient Greece*. Abingdon, England: Routledge. p. 516.

"Jotunheim". norse-mythology.org.

Dalal, Roshen (2014). *Hinduism: An Alphabetical Guide*. Penguin Books. ISBN 978-0-14-341421-6. Entry: "Indraloka".

Kim, Inchang (1996). *The Future Buddha Maitreya: An Iconological Study*. D.K. Printworld. p. 21.

Maehle, Gregor (2012). *Ashtanga Yoga The Intermediate Series: Mythology, Anatomy, and Practice*. New World Library. p. 207. ISBN 978-1-57731-987-0.

Yang, Lihui; et al. (2005). *Handbook of Chinese Mythology*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-533263-6. pp. 162, 219

Jane Dammen McAuliffe *Encyclopaedia of the Qurʾān* Volume 1 Georgetown University, Washington DC p. 205

Al-`Ali, Hamid. "What Is Al-Barzakh?". *About Islam*. Retrieved 18 April 2022.

Siddiqui, Ahdur Rasheed (2015). "Barzakh". *Qur'anic Keywords: A Reference Guide*. Leicestershire, UK: Islamic Foundation. p. 31. Retrieved 18 April 2022.

Abdul Husayn Dastghaib Shirazi (23 January 2013). "Barzakh (Purgatory) - The Stage

Between this World and the Hereafter". The HereAfter (Ma'ad). al-islam.org. Retrieved 18 April 2022.

"What Is al-Barzakh? 11110". Islam Question and Answer. 10 January 2000. Retrieved 18 April 2022.

Al-Saadi, Qais Mughashghash; Al-Saadi, Hamed Mughashghash (2012). Ginza Rabba: The Great Treasure. An equivalent translation of the Mandaean Holy Book. Drabsha.

Buckley, Jorunn Jacobsen (2002). The Mandaeans: ancient texts and modern people. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-515385-5. OCLC 65198443.

The Gnostic Bible (2003) (p. 810). New Seeds Books

Mountain, Harry (May 1998). The Celtic Encyclopedia. Universal-Publishers. p. 679.

ISBN 978-1-58112-892-5. Retrieved 16 January 2011.

Leech 1984, p. 10.

Leech 1984, p. 25.

Dawson, M. M. (2005). The Ethical Religion of Zoroaster. Kessinger Publishing. p. 237. ISBN 9780766191365.

"El Dorado". National Geographic. Archived from the original on November 18, 2010.

"SECTION 37 HIS LOGGING CAMP". paulbunyan.org.

Works cited

Leech, Maria (1984). Funk & Wagnalls Standard Dictionary of Folklore, Mythology, and Legend. New York: HarperCollins. ISBN 0-308-40090-9.

vte

Continents of Earth

Africa

Antarctica

Asia

Australia

Europe

North America

South America

[Afro-Eurasia](#)

[Americas](#)

[Eurasia](#)

[Oceania](#)

[Prehistoric supercontinents](#)

[Columbia](#)[Gondwana](#)[Kenorland](#)[Laurasia](#)[Nena](#)[Pangaea](#)[Pannotia](#)[Rodinia](#)[Ur](#)[Vaalbara](#)

[Other prehistoric continents](#)

[Amazonia](#)[Arctica](#)[Asiamerica](#)[Atlantica](#)[Avalonia](#)[Baltica](#)[Chilenia](#)[Cimmeria](#)[Congo](#)

[Craton](#)[Cuyania](#)[East](#)

[Antarctica](#)[Euramerica](#)[Kalaharia](#)[Kazakhstania](#)[Laramidia](#)[Laurentia](#)[North](#)

[China](#)[Pampia](#)[Sahul](#)[Siberia](#)[South China](#)

[Submerged continent/lands and microcontinents](#)

[Beringia](#)[Cathaysia](#)[Iceland](#)[Davis Strait](#)[Doggerland](#)[Great Australian Bight](#)[Jan](#)

[Mayen](#)[Kerguelen Plateau](#)[Madagascar](#)[Mauritia](#)[Rockall](#)

[Basin](#)[Sahul](#)[Seychelles](#)[Sunda](#)[Zealandia](#)

[Possible future supercontinents](#)

[Amasia](#)[Aurica](#)[Novopangaea](#)[Pangaea Proxima](#)

[Mythical, lost, and hypothesised continents](#)

[Atlantis](#)[Hyperborea](#)[Kumari](#)[Kandam](#)[Lemuria](#)[Meropis](#)[Mu](#)[Terra Australis](#)

[Subcontinents](#)

[Alaska](#)[Arabia](#)[Central America](#)[Eastern Africa](#)[Eastern Siberia](#)[Greenland \(Territory\)](#)[Indian](#)

[Subcontinent](#)

[See also:](#) [World portal](#)[Regions of the world](#)[Continental fragment](#) [Category](#)[Chronology](#)[of continents](#)

[Categories:](#) [Lists of fictional locations](#)[Mythology-related lists](#)[Mythological places](#)

This page was last edited on 20 November 2025, at 18:14 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

Accessibility feedback
Seasonal Holidays 2025
Eleusinian

AI Mode
All
Images
Videos
Shopping
Short videos
News
More
Tools
AI Overview

The First Mystics: the Eleusinian Mysteries | by Raja ...

"Eleusinian" refers to the ancient Greek Eleusinian Mysteries, secret religious rites held annually at Eleusis, honoring goddesses Demeter and Persephone, focusing on death, rebirth, and the afterlife, symbolized by Persephone's journey to and from the underworld. These popular, secretive ceremonies involved purification, processions, and rituals promising initiates spiritual enlightenment and hope for a better existence beyond death, lasting for centuries before being banned by Christian Roman emperors.

Key Aspects of the Eleusinian Mysteries:

Deities: Centered on Demeter (goddess of agriculture) and her daughter Persephone (Kore), abducted by Hades.

Mythology: Reenacted the myth of Persephone's descent into the underworld and her return, symbolizing loss, search, and reunion, and the cycle of seasons.

Location: Held at the sanctuary in Eleusis, near Athens, along the sacred path (Hiera Hodos).

Participants: Open to all, regardless of age, gender, or status, with the exception of murderers, and included prominent figures like philosophers and poets.

Rituals: Involved purification (bathing), sacrifices, a solemn procession from Athens, fasting, drinking a special beverage (kykeon), and secret rites in the Telesterion (initiation hall).

Secrecy: The precise details of the climax remained secret, with initiates sworn to silence, though it promised a profound, transformative experience.

Legacy: Profoundly influenced Greek and Roman thought, philosophy, and religion, promising initiates freedom from the fear of death.

Eleusinian Mysteries - Wikipedia

The Eleusinian Mysteries (Greek: Ἐλευσίνια Μυστήρια, romanized: Eleusínia Mystéria) were initiations held every year for the cult ...

Wikipedia

Eleusinian Mysteries : r/mythology - Reddit

Apr 2, 2022 — The Eleusinian Mysteries were a set of religious rituals and ceremonies that took place in ancient Greece, particularly...

Reddit ·

r/mythology

Mystical Initiation in Ancient Greece: The Eleusinian Mysteries

Jul 3, 2022 — but are some common characteristics of this vast phenomenon. and the most famous popular and one of the oldest of these...

YouTube ·

Let's Talk Religion

4m

Show all

Show more

Eleusinian Mysteries

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Eleusinian_Mysteries](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eleusinian_Mysteries)

The Mysteries represented the myth of the abduction of Persephone from her mother Demeter by the king of the underworld Hades, in a cycle with three phases: the ...

Elefsina

Kykeon

Panhellenic sanctuary

Hierophant

People also ask

What is the meaning of Eleusinian?

What happened during the Eleusinian Mysteries?

What does the Eleusinian stone do?

What was Eleusis famous for?

Feedback

Things to know

Rituals

.

What were the rituals of the Eleusinian Mysteries?

History

.

What is the history of the Eleusinian Mysteries?

Participants

.

Who could participate in the Eleusinian Mysteries?

Location

.

What is the location of the Eleusinian Mysteries?

Dates

.

When did the Eleusinian Mysteries take place?
Greater Eleusinian Mysteries - Classical Studies

University of Pennsylvania
<https://www2.classics.upenn.edu> › myth › php › hymns
No information is available for this page.
Learn why
What people are saying

The Eleusinian Mysteries, updated
15.2K+ reactions · 1 month ago

PhilosophyMtrrs · Facebook
Philosophy content creator

5:03
Eleusis: Setting of the Mysteries
12.7K+ views · 1 month ago

Scenic Routes to the Past
YouTube

The Eleusinian Mysteries of ancient Greece were not symbolic rituals but biochemical rites of controlled awakening. For nearly two millennia, initiates from across the Mediterranean traveled to Eleusis to drink the kykeon—a potion brewed from barley, mint, and water—believed to induce revelation of the immortal soul. Chemical analysis of surviving grains from the Telesterion suggests the barley was infected with *Claviceps purpurea*, the same ergot fungus later used to synthesize LSD. Plato, Cicero, and even Roman emperors described the initiation as a direct encounter with death and rebirth, not allegory. Within the temple, under precise darkness and rhythmic chant, initiates were guided through neurochemical, auditory, and visual thresholds designed to dissolve the ego and expose consciousness to the archetypal core. The Mysteries weren't mythology—they were neuroscience conducted in marble halls, their formula erased when Christianity declared the experiment heresy. —Mystic E.B. patr
470+ likes · Oct 17, 2025

ancientknowledge_
Instagram
Autumn AD 124 – Hadrian arrives in Athens and attends the Eleusinian Mysteries
40+ likes · 1 week ago

carolemadge · X
Hadrian enthusiast

“The Equinoxes are mid points of pause between Solstices, and they are traditionally the points of celebration of the Eleusinian Mysteries – the ‘Lesser’ in the Spring, and the ‘Greater’ in the Autumn. The Mysteries of Eleusis was a nine-day ceremonial celebrat
130+ reactions · Sep 21, 2025

thegirlgod
Facebook
The Eleusinian Mysteries And Rites

Project Gutenberg
<https://www.gutenberg.org> › files
The Eleusinian Mysteries—those rites of ancient Greece, and later of Rome, of which there is historical evidence dating back to the seventh century before the ...
Eleusinian Mysteries / Eleusinia ta megala

Hellenion
<https://www.hellenion.org> › festivals › eleusinian-myste...
The Eleusinian Mysteries (Eleusinia ta megala), honoring Demeter and her daughter Persephone, were the most popular of the mystery cults.
Eleusinian Mysteries: Home
eleusinianmysteries.org
<https://eleusinianmysteries.org>
The Eleusinian Mysteries, ancient initiation rituals held in honor of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone, induced an artificial crisis in participants.
The Eleusinian Mysteries

Hellenic Museum
<https://www.hellenic.org.au> › post › the-eleusinian-myst...
Oct 8, 2021 — The Eleusinian sanctuary was built in honour of the goddess Demeter (think Harvest, Spring, Eternal Rebirth and Life Abundant), the central ...
Eleusinian Mysteries | Research Starters

EBSCO
<https://www.ebsco.com> › religion-and-philosophy › ele...
The Eleusinian Mysteries were a significant religious cult in ancient Greece, centered around the worship of the goddess Demeter.
Videos
Mystical Initiation in Ancient Greece: The Eleusinian Mysteries
YouTube · Let's Talk Religion

Jul 3, 2022

YouTube · Let's Talk Religion

20:25

The mystery cults were rights of initiation often associated with a specific deity at its center.

the eleusinian mysteries || what happened inside the temple??

YouTube · fig tree

Apr 7, 2023

YouTube · fig tree

12:21

Learn about the mysterious Eleusinian Mysteries, a secret cult in ancient Greece dedicated to Demeter and Persephone, involving initiations and rituals.

Ancient Mysticism: The Mysteries at Eleusis

YouTube · Nothing New

Nov 14, 2022

YouTube · Nothing New

19:47

Learn about the mysterious and secretive Greek Eleusinian mysteries, a central religious practice for almost 2,000 years, featuring initiation, purification, and a transformative experience.

Feedback

View all

Eleusinian Mysteries - The Past

the-past.com

<https://the-past.com> › Feature

Jun 17, 2023 — Dalu Jones visits its ancient remains to enter the realm of the Eleusinian Mysteries, secret rites honouring the renewal of life.

People also search for

Eleusinian Mysteries PDF

Eleusinian Mysteries book

Eleusinian pronunciation

Eleusinian Mysteries rituals

Eleusinian meaning

Eleusinian Mysteries kykeon

Eleusinian Mysteries temple

Eleusinian Mysteries meaning

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Eleusinian Mysteries

Eleusinian Mysteries - Wikipedia

Ten marble fragments of the Great Eleusinian Relief - Roman ...

Eleusinian Mysteries - Wikipedia

BBC World Service - The Forum, Eleusinian Mysteries: Secret ...

The Eleusinian Mysteries were initiations held every year for the cult of Demeter and Persephone based at the Panhellenic Sanctuary of Eleusis in ancient Greece. They are considered the "most famous of the secret religious rites of ancient Greece".

Source:

Wikipedia

People also search for

Dionysia

Thesmophoria

Haloa

Pyanopsia

See more

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Eleusinian Mysteries

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

[View history](#)

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A votive plaque known as the Ninnion Tablet depicting elements of the Eleusinian Mysteries, discovered in the sanctuary at Eleusis (mid-4th century BC)

The Eleusinian Mysteries (Greek: Ἐλευσίνια Μυστήρια, romanized: Eleusínia Mystéria) were initiations held every year for the cult of Demeter and Persephone based at the Panhellenic Sanctuary of Eleusis in ancient Greece. They are considered the "most famous of the secret religious rites of ancient Greece".[1] Their basis was a Bronze Age agrarian cult,[2] and there is some evidence that they were derived from the religious practices of the Mycenaean period.[3][4] The Mysteries represented the myth of the abduction of Persephone from her mother Demeter by the king of the underworld Hades, in a cycle with three phases: the descent (loss), the search, and the ascent, with the main theme being the ascent (ἀνοδος) of Persephone and the reunion with her mother. It was a major festival during the Hellenic era, and later spread to Rome.[5]

The rites, ceremonies, and beliefs were kept secret and consistently preserved from antiquity.[6] For the initiated, the rebirth of Persephone symbolized the eternity of life which flows from generation to generation, and they believed that they would have a reward in the afterlife.[7][8] There are many paintings and pieces of pottery that depict various aspects of the Mysteries. Since the Mysteries involved visions and conjuring of an afterlife, some scholars believe that the power and longevity of the Eleusinian Mysteries, a consistent set of rites, ceremonies and experiences that spanned two millennia, came from psychedelic drugs [disputed – discuss].[9][10] The name of the town, Eleusis, seems to be pre-Greek, and is likely a counterpart with Elysium and the goddess Eileithyia.[11]

Etymology

Eleusinian Mysteries (Greek: Ἐλευσίνια Μυστήρια) was the name of the mysteries of the city Eleusis.

The name of the city Eleusis is Pre-Greek, and may be related with the name of the goddess Eileithyia.[12] Her name Ἐλυσία (Elysia) in Laconia and Messene probably relates her with the month Eleusinius and Eleusis,[13] but this is debated.[14]

The ancient Greek word from which English mystery derives, mystérion (μυστήριον), means "mystery or secret rite"[15] and is related with the verb myéō (μυέω), which means "(I) teach, initiate into the mysteries",[16] and the noun mýstēs (μύστης), which means "one initiated".[17] The word mystikós (μυστικός), source of the English mystic, means "connected with the mysteries", or "private, secret" (as in Modern Greek).[18]

Demeter and Persephone

Further information: Demeter

Triptolemus receiving wheat sheaves from Demeter and blessings from Persephone, Great Eleusinian Relief, 5th-century BC relief, National Archaeological Museum of Athens

The Mysteries are related to a myth concerning Demeter, the goddess of agriculture and fertility as recounted in one of the Homeric Hymns (c. 650 BC). According to the hymn, Demeter's daughter Persephone (also referred to as Kore, "maiden") was assigned the task of painting all the flowers of the earth. Before completion, she was seized by Hades, the god of the underworld, who took her to his underworld kingdom. Distraught, Demeter searched high and low for her daughter. Because of her distress, and in an effort to coerce Zeus to allow the return of her daughter, she caused a terrible drought in which the people suffered and starved, depriving the gods of sacrifice and worship. As a result, Zeus relented and allowed Persephone to return to her mother.[19]

According to the myth, during her search Demeter traveled long distances and had many minor adventures along the way. In one she taught the secrets of agriculture to Triptolemus.[20] Finally, by consulting Zeus, Demeter reunited with her daughter and the earth returned to its former verdure and prosperity: the first spring.

Zeus, pressed by the cries of the hungry people and by the other deities who also heard their anguish, forced Hades to return Persephone. However, it was a rule of the Fates that whoever consumed food or drink in the Underworld was doomed to spend eternity there. Before Persephone was released to Hermes, who had been sent to retrieve her, Hades tricked her into eating pomegranate seeds (either six or four according to the telling), which forced her to return to the underworld for some months each year. She was obliged to remain with Hades for six or four months (one month per seed) and lived above ground with her mother for the rest of the year. This left a long period of time when Demeter was unhappy due to Persephone's absence, neglecting to cultivate the earth. When Persephone returned to the surface, Demeter became joyful and cared for the earth again.

In the central foundation document of the mystery, the Homeric Hymn to Demeter line 415, Persephone is said to stay with Hades during winter and return to her mother in the spring of the year: "This was the day [of Persephone's return], at the very beginning of bountiful springtime." [21]

Persephone's rebirth is symbolic of the rebirth of all plant life and the symbol of eternity of life that flows from the generations that spring from each other.[22]

However, a scholar has proposed a different version,[23] according to which the four months during which Persephone is with Hades correspond to the dry Greek summer, a period during which plants are threatened with drought.[24]

Mysteries

Demeter, enthroned and extending her hand in a benediction toward the kneeling Metaneira, who offers the wheat that is a recurring symbol of the mysteries (Varrese Painter, red-figure hydria, c. 340 BC, from Apulia)

The Eleusinian Mysteries are believed to have ancient origins. Some findings in the temple Eleusinion in Attica suggest that their basis was an old agrarian cult.[25] Some practices of the mysteries seem to have been influenced by the religious practices of the Mycenaean period, thus predating the Greek Dark Ages.[3][4] Excavations showed that a private building existed under the Telesterion in the Mycenaean period, and it seems that originally the cult of Demeter was private. In the Homeric Hymn is mentioned the palace of the king Keleos.[26]

One line of thought by modern scholars has been that the Mysteries were intended "to elevate man above the human sphere into the divine and to assure his redemption by making him a god and so conferring immortality upon him".[27]

Some scholars argued that the Eleusinian cult was a continuation of a Minoan cult,[28] and that Demeter was a poppy goddess who brought the poppy from Crete to Eleusis. [29][30] Some useful information from the Mycenaean period can be taken from the study of the cult of Despoina (the precursor goddess of Persephone) and the cult of Eileithyia, who was the goddess of childbirth. The megaron of Despoina at Lycosura is quite similar to the Telesterion of Eleusis,[31] and Demeter is united with the god Poseidon, bearing a daughter, the unnamable Despoina (the mistress).[32] In the cave of Amnisos at Crete, the goddess Eileithyia is related with the annual birth of the divine child, and she is connected with Enesidaon (The Earth Shaker),[33] who is the chthonic aspect of Poseidon.[34]

At Eleusis inscriptions refer to "the Goddesses" accompanied by the agricultural god Triptolemus (probably son of Ge and Oceanus),[35] and "the God and the Goddess" (Persephone and Plouton) accompanied by Eubuleus who probably led the way back from the underworld.[36] The myth was represented in a cycle with three phases: the "descent", the "search", and the "ascent" (Greek anodos) with contrasted emotions from sorrow to joy which roused the mystae to exultation.

The main theme was the ascent of Persephone and the reunion with her mother Demeter.[37] At the beginning of the feast, the priests filled two special vessels and poured them out, one towards the west and the other towards the east. The people looking both to the sky and the earth shouted in a magical rhyme "rain and conceive". In a ritual, a child was initiated from the hearth (the divine fire). The name pais (child) appears in the Mycenaean inscriptions,[38] it was the ritual of the "divine child" who originally was Ploutos. In the Homeric hymn the ritual is connected with the myth of the agricultural god Triptolemus.[39] The goddess of nature survived in the mysteries where the following words were uttered: "Mighty Potnia bore a great son".[3] Potnia (Linear B po-ti-ni-ja : lady or mistress), is a Mycenaean title applied to goddesses,[40] and probably the translation of a similar title of pre-Greek origin.[41]

The high point of the celebration was "an ear of grain cut in silence", which represented the force of the new life. The idea of immortality did not exist in the mysteries at the beginning, but the initiated believed that they would have a better fate in the underworld. Death remained a reality, but at the same time a new beginning like the plant which grows from the buried seed.[4] A depiction from the old palace of Phaistos is very close to the image of the anodos of Persephone. An armless and legless deity grows out of the ground, and her head turns to a large flower.[42]

According to George Mylonas, the lesser mysteries were held "as a rule once a year in the early spring in the month of flowers, the Anthesterion," while "the Greater Mysteries were held once a year and every fourth year they were celebrated with special splendor in what was known as the penteteris.[43] Kerényi concurs with this assessment: "The Lesser Mysteries were held at Agrai in the month of Anthesterion, our February... The initiates were not even admitted to the epopteia [Greater Mysteries] in the same year, but only in September of the following year."[44] This cycle continued for about two millennia. In the Homeric Hymn to Demeter, King Celeus is said to have been one of the first people to learn the secret rites and mysteries of her cult. He was also one of her original priests, along with Diocles, Eumolpos, Polyxeinus, and Triptolemus, Celeus' son, who had supposedly learned agriculture from Demeter.[45]

Under Peisistratos of Athens, the Eleusinian Mysteries became pan-Hellenic, and pilgrims flocked from Greece and beyond to participate. Around 300 BC, the state took over control of the mysteries; they were controlled by two families, the Eumolpidae and the Kerykes. This led to a vast increase in the number of initiates. The only requirements for membership were freedom from "blood guilt",[46] meaning never having committed murder, and not being a "barbarian" (being unable to speak Greek). Men, women, and even slaves were allowed initiation.[47]

Participants

To participate in these mysteries one had to swear a vow of secrecy.

Four categories of people participated in the Eleusinian Mysteries:

Priests, priestesses, and hierophants

Those who had attained épopteia (Greek: ἐποπτεία) (contemplation), who had learned the secrets of the greatest mysteries of Demeter

Those who had already participated at least once – they were eligible for attaining épopteia

Initiates, undergoing the ceremony for the first time

Priesthood

The priesthood officiating at the Eleusinian Mysteries and in the sanctuary was divided into several offices with different tasks.

Six categories of priests officiated in the Eleusinian Mysteries:

Hierophantes – male high priest, an office inherited within the Phileidae or Eumolpidae families.[48]

High Priestess of Demeter or Priestess of Demeter and Kore – an office inherited within the Phileidae or Eumolpidae families.[48]

Dadouchos – men serving as torch bearers, the second-highest male role next to Hierophantes.[48]

Dadouchousa Priestess – a female priestess who assisted the Dadouchos, an office inherited within the Phileidae or Eumolpidae families.[48]

Hierophantides – two married priestesses, one serving Demeter, and the other Persephone.[48]

Panageis ('the holy') or melissae ('bees') – a group of priestesses who lived a life secluded from men.[48]

The offices of Hierophant, High Priestess, and Dadouchousa priestess were all inherited within the Phileidae or Eumolpidae families, and the Hierophant and the High Priestess were of equal rank.[48] It was the task of the High Priestess to impersonate the roles of the goddesses Demeter and Persephone in the enactment during the mysteries, and at Eleusis events were dated by the name of the reigning High Priestess.[48]

Secrets

The outline below is only a capsule summary; much of the concrete information about the Eleusinian Mysteries was never written down. For example, only initiates knew what the kiste, a sacred chest, and the kalathus, a lidded basket, contained.

Hippolytus of Rome, one of the Church Fathers writing in the early 3rd century AD, discloses in *Refutation of All Heresies* that "the Athenians, while initiating people into the Eleusinian rites, likewise display to those who are being admitted to the highest grade at these mysteries, the mighty, and marvellous, and most perfect secret suitable for one initiated into the highest mystic truths: an ear of grain in silence reaped." [49]

Lesser Mysteries

There were two Eleusinian Mysteries, the Greater and the Lesser. According to Thomas Taylor, "the dramatic shows of the Lesser Mysteries occultly signified the miseries of the soul while in subjection to the body, so those of the Greater obscurely intimated, by mystic and splendid visions, the felicity of the soul both here and hereafter, when purified from the defilements of a material nature and constantly elevated to the realities of intellectual [spiritual] vision." According to Plato, "the ultimate design of the Mysteries ... was to lead us back to the principles from which we descended, ... a perfect enjoyment of intellectual [spiritual] good." [50]

The Lesser Mysteries took place in the month of Anthesterion – the eighth month of the Attic calendar, falling in mid winter around February or March – under the direction of Athens' archon basileus. In order to qualify for initiation, participants would sacrifice a piglet[citation needed] to Demeter and Persephone, and then ritually purify themselves in the river Illisos. Upon completion of the Lesser Mysteries, participants were deemed mystai (initiates) worthy of witnessing the Greater Mysteries.

Greater Mysteries

For among the many excellent and indeed divine institutions which your Athens has brought forth and contributed to human life, none, in my opinion, is better than those mysteries. For by their means we have been brought out of our barbarous and savage mode of life and educated and refined to a state of civilization; and as the rites are called "initiations," so in very truth we have learned from them the beginnings of life, and have gained the power not only to live happily, but also to die with a better hope.

Cicero, *Laws II*, xiv, 36

The Greater Mysteries took place in Boedromion – the third month of the Attic calendar, falling in late summer around September or October – and lasted ten days.

The first act (on the 14th of Boedromion) was the bringing of the sacred objects from Eleusis to the Eleusinion, a temple at the base of the Acropolis of Athens.

On the 15th of Boedromion, a day called the Gathering (Agrymos), the priests (hierophantes, those who show the sacred ones) declared the start of the rites (prorrhesis), and carried out the sacrifice (hiereía deúro, hither the victims).

The seawards initiates (halade mystai) started out in Athens on 16th Boedromion with the celebrants washing themselves in the sea at Phaleron.

On the 17th, the participants began the Epidauria, a festival for Asklepios named after his main sanctuary at Epidauros. This "festival within a festival" celebrated the healer's arrival at Athens with his daughter Hygieia, and consisted of a procession leading to the Eleusinion, during which the mystai apparently stayed at home, a great sacrifice, and an all-night feast (pannykhís).[51]

The procession to Eleusis began at Kerameikos (the Athenian cemetery) on the 18th, and from there the people walked to Eleusis, along the Sacred Way (Ἱερὰ Ὀδός, Hierá Hodós), swinging branches called bacchoi.[52] At a certain spot along the way, they shouted obscenities in commemoration of Iambe (or Baubo), an old woman who, by cracking dirty jokes, had made Demeter smile as she mourned the loss of her daughter. The procession also shouted "Íakch', O Íakche!", possibly an epithet for Dionysus, or a separate deity Iacchus, son of Persephone or Demeter.[53]

Upon reaching Eleusis, there was an all-night vigil (pannychis) according to Mylonas[54] and Kerényi.[55] perhaps commemorating Demeter's search for Persephone. At some point, initiates had a special drink (kykeon), of barley and pennyroyal, which has led to speculation about its chemicals perhaps having psychotropic effects from ergot (a fungus that grows on barley, containing psychedelic alkaloids similar to LSD). Discovery of fragments of ergot in a temple dedicated to the two Eleusinian goddesses excavated at the Mas Castellar site (Girona, Spain) provided legitimacy for this theory. Ergot fragments were found inside a vase and within the dental calculus (plaque) of a 25-year-

old man, providing evidence of ergot being consumed (Juan-Stresserras, 2002). This finding seems to support the hypothesis of ergot as an ingredient of the Eleusinian kykeon.

Inside the Telesterion

Initiation to Eleusinian Mysteries. c. 100–50 BC; relief, Louvre museum (Paris, France)
On the 19th of Boedromion, initiates entered a great hall called Telesterion; in the center stood the Palace (Anaktoron), built of ruins dating back to the Mycenaean Age,[46] which only the hierophants could enter, where sacred objects were stored. Before mystai could enter the Telesterion, they would recite, "I have fasted, I have drunk the kykeon, I have taken from the kiste (box) and after working it have put it back in the calathus (open basket).[56]

It is widely supposed that the rites inside the Telesterion comprised three elements:

dromena (things done), a dramatic reenactment of the Demeter/Persephone myth
deiknumena (things shown), displayed sacred objects, in which the hierophant played an essential role

legomena (things said), commentaries that accompanied the deiknumena[57]

Combined, these three elements were known as the aporrheta (unrepeatables); the penalty for divulging them was death.

Athenagoras of Athens, Cicero, and other ancient writers cite that it was for this crime (among others) that Diagoras was condemned to death in Athens;[58][59] the tragic playwright Aeschylus was allegedly tried for revealing secrets of the mysteries in some of his plays, but was acquitted.[60] The ban on divulging the core ritual of the mysteries was thus absolute, which is probably why almost nothing is known about what transpired there.

Climax

As to the climax of the mysteries, there are two modern theories.

Some hold that the priests were the ones to reveal the visions of the holy night, consisting of a fire that represented the possibility of life after death, and various sacred objects. Others hold this explanation to be insufficient to account for the power and longevity of the mysteries, and that the experiences must have been internal and mediated by a powerful psychoactive ingredient contained in the kykeon drink (see Entheogenic theories below). Although this hypothesis continues to receive attention, it was not well received by classicists[61] .

Following this section of the Mysteries was an all-night feast (Pannychis)[62] accompanied by dancing and merriment. This portion of the festivities was open to the public.[63] The dances took place in the Rarian Field, rumored to be the first spot where

grain grew. A bull sacrifice also took place late that night or early the next morning. That day (22nd Boedromion), the initiates honoured the dead by pouring libations from special vessels.

On the 23rd of Boedromion, the mysteries ended and everyone returned home.[64]

Demise

In 170 AD, the Temple of Demeter was sacked by the Sarmatians but was rebuilt by Marcus Aurelius. Aurelius was then allowed to become the only lay person ever to enter the anaktoron. As Christianity gained in popularity in the 4th and 5th centuries, Eleusis's prestige began to fade. The last pagan emperor of Rome, Julian, reigned from 361 to 363 after about fifty years of Christian rule. Julian attempted to restore the Eleusinian Mysteries and was the last emperor to be initiated into them.[65] The closing of the Eleusinian Mysteries in 392 AD by the emperor Theodosius I is reported by Eunapius, a historian and biographer of the Greek philosophers. Eunapius had been initiated by the last legitimate Hierophant, who had been commissioned by the emperor Julian to restore the Mysteries, which had by then fallen into decay. According to Eunapius, the last Hierophant was a usurper, "the man from Thespieae who held the rank of Father in the mysteries of Mithras". According to Eunapius, in 396, during his raiding campaign in Attica, the king of the Goths Alaric I [66] looted the remains of the shrines.[67][68][69][70][71][72]

According to historian Hans Kloft, despite the destruction of the Eleusinian Mysteries, elements of the cult survived in the Greek countryside. There, local peasants and shepherds partially transferred Demeter's rites and religious duties onto Saint Demetrius of Thessaloniki, who gradually became the local patron of agriculture and "heir" to the pagan mother goddess.[73]

In art, literature, and culture

The Eleusinian Mysteries Hydria, showing the reunion of Demeter and Persephone at the start of each spring

There are many paintings and pieces of pottery that depict various aspects of the Mysteries. The Eleusinian Relief, from the late 5th century BC, displayed in the National Archaeological Museum of Athens is a representative example. Triptolemus is depicted receiving seeds from Demeter and teaching mankind how to work the fields to grow crops, with Persephone holding her hand over his head to protect him.[74] Vases and other works of relief sculpture, from the 4th, 5th and 6th centuries BC, depict Triptolemus holding an ear of corn, sitting on a winged throne or chariot, surrounded by Persephone and Demeter with pine torches. The monumental Protoattic amphora from the middle of the 7th century BC, with the depiction of Medusa's beheading by Perseus and the blinding of Polyphemos by Odysseus and his companions on its neck, is kept in the Archaeological Museum of Eleusis which is located inside the archaeological site of Eleusis.

The Ninnion Tablet, found in the same museum, depicts Demeter, followed by Persephone and Iakchos, and then the procession of initiates. Then, Demeter is sitting on the kiste inside the Telesterion, with Persephone holding a torch and introducing the initiates. The initiates each hold a bacchoi. The second row of initiates were led by Iakchos, a priest who held torches for the ceremonies. He is standing near the omphalos while an unknown female (probably a priestess of Demeter) sat nearby on the kiste, holding a scepter and a vessel filled with kykeon. Pannychis is also represented.

The Myth of Er, part of Plato's Republic, is thought to be a representation of the teaching of the Eleusinian Mysteries. Er, after being killed in battle and brought to the underworld, is reincarnated without drinking from the River Lethe. He retains his memories and tells the living about his experience in the underworld. He no longer has a fear of death.[75]

In Shakespeare's Mystery Play: A Study of The Tempest, Colin Still argued that The Tempest was an allegory for initiation into the Eleusinian Mysteries.[76] Though widely rejected, this interpretation was supported by Michael Srigley in Images of Regeneration.[77]

Carl Gustav Jung (1875–1961) borrowed terms and interpretations from the late 19th and early 20th century classical scholarship in German and French as a source of metaphors for his reframing of psychoanalytic treatment into a spiritualistic ritual of initiation and rebirth. The Eleusinian mysteries, particularly the qualities of the Kore, figured prominently in his writings.[78]

Dimitris Lyacos in the second book of the Poena Damni trilogy With the People from the Bridge, a contemporary, avant-garde play focusing on the return of the dead and the revenant legend combines elements from the Eleusinian mysteries as well as early Christian tradition in order to convey a view of collective salvation. The text uses the pomegranate symbol in order to hint at the residence of the dead in the underworld and their periodical return to the world of the living.[79]

Octavio Vazquez's symphonic poem Eleusis draws on the Eleusinian Mysteries and on other Western esoteric traditions.[80] Commissioned by the Sociedad General de Autores y Editores and the RTVE Symphony Orchestra, it was premiered in 2015 by the RTVE Orchestra and conductor Adrian Leaper at the Teatro Monumental in Madrid.

Entheogenic theories

Numerous scholars have proposed that the power of the Eleusinian Mysteries came from the kykeon's functioning as an entheogen, or psychedelic agent.[9] The use of potions or philtres for magical or religious purposes was relatively common in Greece and the ancient world.[81] The initiates, sensitized by their fast and prepared by preceding ceremonies (see set and setting), may have been propelled by the effects of a powerful psychoactive potion into revelatory mind states with profound spiritual and intellectual ramifications.[82] In opposition to this idea, skeptical scholars note the lack of any solid evidence and stress the collective rather than individual character of

initiation into the Mysteries.[83]

Many psychoactive agents have been proposed as the significant element of kykeon, though without consensus or conclusive evidence. These include the ergot species *Claviceps paspali*,[9] a fungal parasite of *paspalum*, which contains the alkaloids ergotamine, a precursor to LSD, and ergonovine.[82][84] However, modern attempts to prepare a kykeon using ergot-parasitized barley have yielded inconclusive results, though Alexander Shulgin and Ann Shulgin describe ergonovine and LSA to be known to produce LSD-like effects.[85][86]

Discovery of fragments of ergot (fungi containing LSD-like psychedelic alkaloids) in a temple dedicated to the two Eleusinian Goddesses excavated at the Mas Castellar site (Girona, Spain) provided some legitimacy for this theory. Ergot fragments were found inside a vase and within the dental calculus of a 25-year-old man, providing evidence of ergot being consumed. This finding seems to support the hypothesis of ergot as an ingredient of the Eleusinian kykeon.[87]

Psychoactive mushrooms are another candidate. Scholars such as Robert Graves and Terence McKenna, speculated that the mysteries were focused around a variety of *Psilocybe*. [88] Other entheogenic fungi, such as *Amanita muscaria*, have also been suggested.[89] A recent hypothesis suggests that the ancient Egyptians cultivated *Psilocybe cubensis* on barley and associated it with the deity Osiris.[90]

Another candidate for the psychoactive drug is an opioid derived from the poppy. The cult of the goddess Demeter may have brought the poppy from Crete to Eleusis; it is certain that opium was produced in Crete.[91]

Another theory is that the psychoactive agent in kykeon is DMT, which occurs in many wild plants of the Mediterranean, including *Phalaris* and/or *Acacia*. [92] To be active orally (like in ayahuasca) it must be combined with a monoamine oxidase inhibitor such as Syrian rue (*Peganum harmala*), which grows throughout the Mediterranean.

Alternatively, J. Nigro Sansonese (1994), using the mythography supplied by Mylonas, hypothesizes that the Mysteries of Eleusis were a series of practical initiations into trance involving proprioception of the human nervous system induced by breath control (similar to *samyama* in yoga). [93] Sansonese speculates that the *kisté*, a box holding sacred objects opened by the hierophant, is actually an esoteric reference to the initiate's skull, within which is seen a sacred light and are heard sacred sounds, but only after instruction in trance practice. Similarly, the seed-filled chambers of a pomegranate, a fruit associated with the founding of the cult, esoterically describe proprioception of the initiate's heart during trance.

Notable participants

Aeschylus (525/524–456/455 BC)[citation needed]

Plato (428/427 or 424/423–348/347 BC)

Augustus (63 BC–AD 14)

Plutarch (c. AD 46–after 119)[75]

Hadrian (76–138)

Antinous (c. 111–130)

Marcus Aurelius (121–180)

Commodus (161–192)

Gallienus (c. 218–268)[94]

Julian (331–363)

Sophocles[95]

Cicero[95]

See also

Cabeiri

Lacrateides Relief

Christian persecution of paganism under Theodosius I

Dionysian Mysteries

Kykeon

Mycenaean Greece

Orphism

Poppy goddess

Sacerdos Cereris

Notes

Encyclopædia Britannica

Martin P. Nilsson, Vol I, p. 470

Dietrich (1975) The origins of Greek Religion. Bristol Phoenix Press pp. 166, 167

Walter Burkert. (1985)Greek Religion. Harvard University Press. p. 285

Ouvaroff, M. (alternatively given as Sergei Semenovitch Uvarov, or Sergey Uvarov, 1786–1855) (Translated from the French by J. D. Price) Essay on the Mysteries of Eleusis, London : Rodwell and Martin, 1817 (Reprint: United States: Kessinger Publishing, 2004). Ouvaroff does write that fixing the earliest foundation date to the Eleusinian Mysteries is fraught with problems.

Tripolitris, Antonia. Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, November 2001. pp. 16–21.

Burkert, Walter. Ancient Mystery Cults. Harvard University Press (1987) pp. 20-25. ISBN 978-0674033870

Bremmer, Jan N. The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife. Routledge (2001) pp 11-25 ISBN 978-0415141482

Wasson, R. Gordon, Ruck, Carl, Hofmann, A., The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978.

Eiland, Murray (2019). "Ancient Wellsprings of Religion and Creativity". *Antiquvvs*. 1 (2). Interview with Carl Ruck: 8–11.

Elysion: The island of the happy dead (Hesiod: Works and days 166ff.).Eileithyia. A Minoan goddess of childbirth and divine midwifery: F.Schachermeyer(1967). Die Minoische Kultur des alten Kreta. W. Kohlhammer Stuttgart. pp. 141–142

"Cretan dialect 'Eleuthia' would connect Eileithyia (or perhaps the goddess 'Eleutheria') to Eleusis". Willets, p. 222.

F. Schachermeyer (1967). Die Minoische Kultur des alten Kreta. W.Kohlhammer Stuttgart, p. 141

"In Laconia there is a temple of Demeter Eleusinia. The name was used very early, and cannot be an influence of the goddess of Eleusis": Nilsson, Vol I, pp. 313–314

μυστήριον. Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert; A Greek–English Lexicon at the Perseus Project.

μυέω in Liddell and Scott.

μύστης in Liddell and Scott.

μυστικός in Liddell and Scott.

Foley, Helene P., The Homeric "Hymn to Demeter". Princeton University Press, 1994.

Also Vaughn, Steck. Demeter and Persephone. Steck Vaughn Publishing, 1994 [ISBN missing] [page needed]

Smith, William. A New Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Mythology and Geography Vol. II. Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2006.

The Homeric Hymns translated by Jules Cashford, Penguin Books, 2003, p. 24.

Similar ideas appear in many ancient agricultural societies: in the cult of Adonis in Phoenicia, the cult of Osiris in Egypt and the cult of Ariadne in Minoan Crete. Also in China: "There in the buried seed, the end of life is connected with a new beginning": The I Ching or book of changes, transl. Richard Wilhelm p. 45

Smith, 2006.

Greene, William C. "The Return of Persephone". Classical Philology. University of Chicago Press 1946. pp. 105–106

Nilsson, Vol I, p. 470

Nilsson, Vol I, pp. 474, 475

Nilsson, Martin P. Greek Popular Religion "The Religion of Eleusis" New York: Columbia University Press, 1947. pp. 42–64

Kerényi (1976), Dionysos. Archetypal image of indestructible life p. 79

Kerenyi, 1976 p. 23

" Persephone is probably the unnamable mistress of the labyrinth (Mycenean (Linear B) inscription : da-pu-ri-to-jo po-ti-ni-ja) " : Kerényi. Dionysos. Archetypal image of indestructible life. pp. 89, 90.

Burkert: Greek religion p. 285

Pausanias, 8.37.9

Mycenean (Linear B) inscription :E-ne-si-da-o-ne

Dietrich The origins of Greek Religion pp. 220, 221

Pseudo Apollodorus Bibliotheca IV.2

Kevin Kinton (1993), Greek Sanctuaries: New Approaches, Routledge, p. 11

Nilsson, Greek popular religion p. 51

Burkert(1985) p. 285

Wunderlich 1972 The secret of Creta p. 134

Mylonas, George E. (1966). Mycenae and the Mycenaean Age. Princeton University Press. p. 159. ISBN 978-0691035239.

Chadwick: The Mycenaean world p. 92

Burkert (1985)Greek Religion. Harvard University Press. p. 42

Mylonas, George E. "Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries". Princeton University Press

1961, pp. 239, 243.

Kerenyi, Carl. *Eleusis – Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*. Bollingen Foundation 1967, p. 48.

Apollodorus, 1.5.2.

Critchley, Simon (2019-03-13). "Opinion | Athens in Pieces: What Really Happened at Eleusis?". *The New York Times*. ISSN 0362-4331. Retrieved 2022-12-09.

Smith, William. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*, London, 1875.

Pomeroy, Sarah B. (1995). *Goddesses, Whores, Wives, and Slaves: Women in classical antiquity*. New York: Schocken Books.

Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, in ANF, vol. 5; 5, 3

Taylor, p. 49.

Clinton, Kevin. "The Epidauria and the Arrival of Asclepius in Athens", in *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence*, edited by R. Hägg. Stockholm, 1994.

Mystical Initiation in Ancient Greece: The Eleusinian Mysteries, 3 July 2022, retrieved 2022-12-09

Iacchus (Iakchos) has been considered the divine name of the mystic Bacchus at Athens and Eleusis, derived from the boisterous festive song named for him, called Iacchus, and sung during the procession – or the personification of the ritual cry "Íakhe". See Smith, Iacchus; Aristophanes, *Frogs* 316 ff, 5th or 4th century BC; Plutarch, *Life of Alcibiades* 34. 3; Herodotus, *Histories*, 8. 65. 4; Arrian, *Anabasis Alexandri*, ii. 16; Virgil, *Georgics*, i. 166; and Plutarch, *Themistocles*, 15.

Mylonas, G. E., 1961 *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*, p. 258

Kerenyi, C. *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*, p. 62

According to Clement of Alexandria's *Exhortation to the Greeks*. See Meyer 1999, 18.

See (e.g.) Brisson/Teihnayi 2004, 60

Gagné, Renaud (2009). "Mystery Inquisitors: Performance, Authority, and Sacrilege at Eleusis". *Classical Antiquity*. 28 (2): 211–247. doi:10.1525/CA.2009.28.2.211. ISSN 0278-6656.

Filonik, Jakub (2013). "Athenian impiety trials: a reappraisal". *Dike*. 16: 46–51. doi:10.13130/1128-8221/4290. ISSN 1128-8221.

Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 1111a8-10.

Bowden, Hugh (2010). *Mystery Cults in the Ancient World*. Thames & Hudson. p. 53.

παννυχίς. Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert; *A Greek–English Lexicon at the Perseus Project*

Evans, Nancy (2002-01-01). "Sanctuaries, Sacrifices, and the Eleusinian Mysteries". *Numen*. 49 (3): 227–254. doi:10.1163/156852702320263927. ISSN 1568-5276.

Boardman, Griffin, and Murray. *The Oxford History of the Classical World*. Oxford University Press 1986. [page needed]

"Eleusis: Pathways to Ancient Myth". Calvin.edu. Archived from the original on 2017-11-09. Retrieved 2012-09-15.

Kerényi, Karl (2004). *Eleusis: imagen arquetípica de la madre y la hija*. Ediciones Siruela. pp. 44–45. ISBN 978-8478447725.

Bernabé, A., "Las religiones místicas del mundo grecorromano", en David Castro de Castro y Araceli Striano Corrochano (eds.), *Religiones del Mundo Antiguo*, SCEC: Madrid, 2010, pp. 111–137.

Burkert, W., *Religión griega, arcaica y clásica*, Abada: Madrid, 2007.

Clinton, K., *Myth and cult. The iconography of the Eleusynian mysteries*, Svenska institutet i Athen: Estocolmo, 1992.

Cosmopoulos, M. B. (ed.), *Greek mysteries. The archaeology and ritual of ancient Greek secret cults*, Psychology Press: Londres-Nueva York, 2003.

González González, M., *Creencias y rituales funerarios: el más allá en la antigua Grecia*, Síntesis: Madrid, 2018.

Mylonas, G. E., *Eleusis and the Eleusinian mysteries*, Princeton University Press: Princeton, NJ, 1961.

Kloft (2010), p. 25.

"Timeline of Art History: Italian Peninsula, 1000 BC – 1 AD". The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Retrieved July 26, 2007.

"The Eleusinian Mysteries: The Rites of Demeter". World History Encyclopedia. Retrieved 27 April 2019.

Tamplin, Ronald (1967). "The Tempest and The Waste Land". *American Literature*. 39 (3): 352–372. doi:10.2307/2923299. JSTOR 2923299.

Ormsby-Lennon, Hugh (1988). "Review: Images of Regeneration". *Modern Philology*. 85 (3).

Richard Noll. "Mysteria: Jung and the Ancient Mysteries (1994) [uncorrected page proofs of a book cancelled prior to publication due to objections by the Jung family]". Academia.edu.

Julie Kovacs, *The nightmare continues in With the People from the Bridge*. Exercise Bowler, Issue 21, 2015. <http://exercisebowler.com/issue21.htm>

Julian Carrillo Sanz (2017). "Eleusis: música y misterios a tu alcance".

Collins, Derek. *Magic in the Ancient Greek World*. Wiley, 2008

Wasson, et al..

Burkert, op.cit. Ch.4

Ruck, Carl (2000). "Mixing the Kykeon". vdocuments.mx. Archived from the original on 2021-10-21. Retrieved 2021-02-17.

Shulgin & Shulgin. Tihkal. Transform Press, 1997.

"Erowid Ergot Vault". Erowid.org. Retrieved 2012-09-15.

Juan-Stresserras, J. , & Matamala, J. C. (2005). Estudio de residuos microscópicos y compuestos orgánicos en utillaje de molido y de contenido de las vasijas [A study of the microscopic residue and organic compounds in grinding tools and jar contents]. In P. Bueno, R. Balbín, & R. Barroso (cur.), *El dolmen de Toledo* (pp. 235–241). Alcalá de Henares, Spain: Universidad de Alcalá.

Graves, Robert (2011). *The Greek Myths* (Complete and definitive ed.). London: Penguin. ISBN 978-0-241-95274-0. OCLC 761273872.

McKenna.

Stephen R. Berlant (2005). "The entheomycological origin of Egyptian crowns and the esoteric underpinnings of Egyptian religion". *J Ethnopharmacol*. 102 (2). *Journal of Ethnopharmacology*: 275–88. doi:10.1016/j.jep.2005.07.028. PMID 16199133. S2CID 19297225.

Kerényi. Dionysos. Archetypal image of indestructible life. p 24

Metzner, Ralph. "The Reunification of the Sacred and the natural". *Eleusis Volume VIII*,

1997. pp. 3–13

Sansonese, J. Nigro. *The Body of Myth*. Rochester, 1994, pp. 195–215.

The Encyclopedia of Religion, Volume 10, p 233.

Woodward, Sam (2024-08-15). "For Plato, rationalists and mystics can walk the same path". *Psyche*. Retrieved 2025-03-27.

Library resources about

Eleusinian Mysteries

Online books

Resources in your library

Resources in other libraries

Bibliography

Boardman, Griffin, and Murray. *The Oxford History of the Classical World* (Oxford University Press 1986). ISBN 978-0-19-872112-3.

Bowden, Hugh. *Mystery Cults of the Ancient World* (Princeton University Press; 2010)

Bizzotto, Jacopo. "The hypothesis on the presence of entheogens in the Eleusinian mysteries." *Medicina Historica* 2.2 (2018): 85–93.

Brisson, Luc and Tihanyi, Catherine, 2004. *How Philosophers Saved Myths: Allegorical Interpretation and Classical Mythology*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 0-226-07535-4

Burkert, Walter, *Ancient Mystery Cults*, Harvard University Press, 1987. [ISBN missing]

Clinton, Kevin (1974). "The Sacred Officials of the Eleusinian Mysteries". *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society*. 64 (3): 1–143. doi:10.2307/1006226. ISSN 0065-9746. JSTOR 1006226.

Clinton, Kevin (1988). "Sacrifice at the Eleusinian Mysteries". In Hägg, R.; Marinatos, N. (eds.). *Early Greek Cult Practice*. Stockholm. pp. 69–79.

Clinton, Kevin. "The Epidauria and the Arrival of Asclepius in Athens" in *Ancient Greek Cult Practice from the Epigraphical Evidence*. edited by R. Hägg, Stockholm, 1994. ISBN 91-7916-029-8.

Clinton, Kevin (1995). "The sanctuary of Demeter and Kore at Eleusis". *Greek sanctuaries : new approaches*. London: Routledge. ISBN 978-0203432709.

Clinton, Kevin (2004). "Epiphany in the Eleusinian Mysteries". *Illinois Classical Studies*. 29: 85–109. ISSN 0363-1923. JSTOR 23065342.

Clinton, Kevin (2005). *Eleusis, the Inscriptions on Stone: Documents of the Sanctuary of the Two Goddesses and Public Documents of the Deme*. Archaeological Society at Athens. ISBN 978-960-8145-46-7.

Clinton, Kevin (2019). "Journeys to the Eleusinian Mysteries (with an Appendix on the Procession at the Andanian Mysteries)". In Friese, W.; Handberg, S.; Kristensen, T.M. (eds.). *Ascending and Descending the Acropolis. Movement in Athenian Religion*. Athens. pp. 161–177.

Cosmopoulos, Michael (2015). *Bronze Age Eleusis and the Origins of the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-316-36823-7.

Greene, William C. "The Return of Persephone" in *Classical Philology*. University of Chicago Press, 1946. pp. 105–106.

Kerényi, Karl. *Eleusis: Archetypal Image of Mother and Daughter*, Bollingen Foundation, 1967. ISBN 0-691-01915-0.

Metzner, Ralph. "The Reunification of the Sacred and the natural", Eleusis Volume VIII, pp. 3–13 (1997).

Kloft, Hans (2010). *Mysterienkulte der Antike. Götter, Menschen, Rituale* (in German). Munich: C.H. Beck. ISBN 978-3-406-44606-1.

McKenna, Terence. *Food of the Gods: Search for the Original Tree of Knowledge*. Bantam, 1993. ISBN 0-553-37130-4.

Meyer, Marvin W. (1999). *The Ancient Mysteries, a Sourcebook: Sacred Texts of the Mystery Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World*. University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 0-8122-1692-X

Moore, Clifford H. *Religious Thought of the Greeks*. (1916). Kessinger Publishing, 2003. ISBN 0-7661-5130-1.

Mylonas, George Emmanuel. *Eleusis and the Eleusinian Mysteries*. Princeton University Press, 1961.

Muraresku, Brian C. *The Immortality Key: The Secret History of the Religion with No Name*. Macmillan, 2020. ISBN 978-1250207142

Nilsson, Martin P. *Greek Popular Religion* 1940.

Parker, Robert (2005). "Eleusinian Festivals". *Polytheism and society at Athens*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 327–368. ISBN 978-0191534522.

Rosen, Ralph M. "Hipponax fr. 48 DG. and the Eleusinian Kykeon." *The American Journal of Philology* 108.3 (1987): 416–426.

Sansonese, J. Nigro. *The Body of Myth*. Rochester, VT: Inner Traditions, 1994. ISBN 0-89281-409-8.

Shulgin, Alexander, Ann Shulgin. *TiHKAL*. Transform Press, 1997.

Smith, William, *A New Classical Dictionary of Greek and Roman Biography, Mythology and Geography* Vol. II. Kessinger Publishing, LLC, 2006. ISBN 1-4286-4561-6.

Smith, William. *A Dictionary of Greek and Roman Antiquities*. London, 1875.

Tonelli, Angelo. *Eleusis e Orfismo. I Misteri e la tradizione iniziatica greca*. Feltrinelli, 2015. ISBN 978-8807901645

Tripolitis, Antonia. *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 2001. ISBN 0-8028-4913-X.

Wasson, R, Ruck, C., Hofmann, A., *The Road to Eleusis: Unveiling the Secret of the Mysteries*. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, 1978. ISBN 0-15-177872-8.

Virgili, Antonio. "Culti misterici ed orientali a Pompei". Roma. Gangemi, 2008

Willoughby, Harold R. (1929). "The Greater Mysteries at Eleusis". *Pagan Regeneration: A Study of Mystery Initiations in the Graeco-Roman World*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Eleusinian Mysteries.

The Eleusinian Mysteries, Edward A. Beach

The Eleusinian Mysteries at the Library of Congress Web Archives (archived 2001-11-30), Thomas R. Martin, from *An Overview of Classical Greek History from Homer to Alexander*.

Images of Inscriptions about the Mysteries at Eleusis, Cornell University Library

Foreword and first chapter from *The Road to Eleusis* Archived 2012-12-14 at the

Wayback Machine R. Gordon Wasson, Albert Hofmann, Carl A. P. Ruck
Mixing the Kykeon, Peter Webster, Daniel M. Perrine, Ph.D, and Carl A. P. Ruck. From
the pages of ELEUSIS: Journal of Psychoactive Plants and Compounds New Series 4,
2000

Rosicrucian Digest vol. 87 devoted entirely to the Eleusinian Mysteries

[vte](#)

[Ancient Greek religion and mythology](#)

[vte](#)

[Paganism \(and modern paganism\)](#)

[Authority control databases](#) [Edit this at Wikidata](#)

[Categories:](#) [Eleusinian Mysteries](#)[Festivals in ancient Greece](#)[February](#)

[observances](#)[March observances](#)[September observances](#)[Festivals in ancient Athens](#)

This page was last edited on 9 September 2025, at 09:34 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;
additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and
Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Orphic,](#)

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Images](#)

[Shopping](#)

[Videos](#)

[Short videos](#)

[News](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[AI Overview](#)

Orphism and Mithraism were ancient Mediterranean mystery cults focused on salvation, initiation, and a dualistic view of humanity (spirit vs. body), with Orphism tied to the mythical poet Orpheus, emphasizing reincarnation and purification through Dionysian rites, while Mithraism centered on the god Mithras, featuring elaborate seven-grade initiations, symbolic rituals like the bull-slaying (tauroctony), and a cosmic, astrological focus. Both offered esoteric knowledge, secret rites, and the promise of a better afterlife for initiates, sharing themes of cosmic cycles, death, and rebirth, often using complex symbolism.

Orphism

Founder/Figure: The legendary poet Orpheus, a shamanistic figure who journeyed to the underworld.

Core Beliefs: Dualistic nature of humans (divine soul, earthly body), reincarnation (transmigration of souls), purification to escape the cycle of rebirth, and an afterlife with gods/heroes.

Practices: Ascetic lifestyle, secret rituals, use of Orphic hymns, initiation into Dionysian mysteries, and belief in a divine spark within humans.

Key Deities: Dionysus, Persephone, Phanes (bringer of light).

(Mithraic Mysteries)

Deity: , a god of contracts, friendship, and cosmic order, originating from Persian roots.

Practices: Secret rites in underground temples (mithraea).

Initiation: A hierarchical system with seven grades (Raven, Bridegroom, Soldier, Lion, Persian, Sun-runner, Father), each associated with a planet and specific symbols/rituals.

Central Myth: slaying the bull (), a pivotal act of cosmic creation and salvation.

Themes: Cosmic cycles, the Sun, loyalty, brotherhood, and salvific death.

Connections & Contrasts

Shared Themes: Both provided secret knowledge, initiation, and a path to spiritual liberation, appealing to those seeking meaning beyond mainstream Greco-Roman religion.

Symbolism: Both used complex, often overlapping symbols (bull-slaying, cosmic figures like the in Orphism).

Focus: Orphism was more focused on the soul's journey and reincarnation, while Mithraism emphasized cosmic order, community, and a distinct set of initiatory grades and myths.

Peter Mark Adams, Mithras and the Renaissance

Feb 6, 2024 — The influence of Mithraic and Orphic imagery According to Adams, the Sola Busca Tarot contains echoes of Mithraism and ...

The New Mithraeum

Orphic religion | Mystery Cults, Ancient Greece, Dionysus - Britannica

Nov 6, 2025 — Encyclopaedia Britannica's editors oversee subject areas in which they have extensive knowledge, whether from years of ...

Britannica

The Influence of Egyptian Funerary Practices on Greek Orphism : A Comparison of the Egyptian Book of the Dead and the Orphic Gold Tablets

Orphism is a religious and philosophical group that is also known as a mystery cult. It is a branch of Dionysiac, or Bacchic, wors...

Kalamazoo College

Show all

Dive deeper in AI Mode

Orphism

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Orphism>

In Orphic belief, this myth describes humanity as having a dual nature: body (Ancient Greek: σῶμα, romanized: sôma), inherited from the Titans, and a divine ...

Missing: Mithraic) | Show results with: Mithraic)

Mithraic Aion and Orphic Phanes

Teacher Curator

<https://www.teachercurator.com/Blog>

Apr 24, 2025 — This intricate relief brings together two enigmatic deities—Mithraic Aion and Orphic Phanes—whose fusion reflects a profound cosmological vision ...

People also ask

What are the 7 levels of Mithraism?

Who is the nonbinary Greek god?

What are the core beliefs of orphism?

What is the scariest Greek myth?

Feedback

(PDF) The Modena Relief: A Mystery of What?

Academia.edu

https://www.academia.edu/The_Modena_Relief_A_M...

The Modena relief, dating from 125-150 AD, depicts a syncretistic deity integrating Orphic and Mithraic elements. The relief measures 71 cm in height, 48 cm in ...

The Roman cult of Mithras

The Tertullian Project

<https://mithras.tertullian.org>

Mithras is sometimes depicted in a similar manner to the Orphic deity Phanes. always described as "sol invictus" never became a state cult,

Orphic Mithras-Dionysus

Groups.io

https://groups.io/Mithras/topic/orphic_mithras_dio...

Nov 1, 2000 — The myth of Mithras is a quest to return to Heaven (Caelum-Saeculum or Zeus-Chronos), to open the path of return to the human race.

Mithras@groups.io | The Orphic/Mithraic Ladder

Dec 21, 2024

Orphic Mithras-Dionysus: where is Saturn? - Groups.io

Nov 18, 2019

More results from groups.io

Videos

Adams on Mithras — The New Mithraeum
The New Mithraeum · The New Mithraeum
May 18, 2025
The New Mithraeum · The New Mithraeum

48:45

Peter Mark Adams discusses his new book on Mithraism, challenging current academic conventions and offering a deep, well-informed, and provocative perspective.

The Mystery Cult of Mithras by Peter Mark Adams & Andreu ...

YouTube · watkinsbooks

Aug 16, 2025

YouTube · watkinsbooks

58:41

The cult of Mithras within the framework of the larger uh practice of mystery cult throughout the near east uh right back at least to the Bronze Age.

The Secrets of the Orphic Mysteries

YouTube · Keimelia

Nov 14, 2022

YouTube · Keimelia

7:15

Learn about the Orphic Mysteries, a complex religion linked to Orpheus, Pythagoras, and the transmigration of souls.

Feedback

View all

Hymnus invicto: The structure of Mithraic cult images with ...

Heidelberger OJS-Journals

<https://journals.ub.uni-heidelberg.de> › download

PDF

by A Kirichenko · 2005 · Cited by 9 — The most significant collection of ancient hymns related to a religious cult are the so-called Orphic Hymns⁴⁰. This is a collection of 87 relatively short hymns

Mithras Sol Invictus: an Initiate's Guide

Tastes Of History

<https://www.tastesofhistory.co.uk> › post › mithras-sol-in...

Feb 15, 2021 — Mithras may have been seen as the Orphic creator-god Phanes who emerged from the world egg at the beginning of time, bringing the universe into ...

Mithraism in comparison with other belief systems

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Mithraism_in_compari...

Orphic speculation influenced the cult of Mithras at times. In Orphic cosmogony, Phanes

emerges from the world egg at the beginning of time, bringing ...
Mithras, Lord of The Cosmos: The Lion Headed God of the ...

Substack · The New Platonic Academy

5 likes · 9 months ago

The Mithraic Leontocephaline God epitomizes the ontological dialectic of cyclical recurrence and transcendence, mirroring Nietzsche's doctrine ...

Orphic, Mithraic) from thenewplatoniacademy.substack.com

People also search for

Orphic mithraic wikipedia

Mithras and Christianity

Orphic meaning

Orphic theogony

Orphic gods

Orphism

Mithras and Jesus similarities and differences

Orphic Mysteries meaning

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms

AI overview is ready

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Orphism

Article

Talk
Read
Edit
View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
For the offshoot of Cubism, see Orphism (art).

Orphic mosaics were found in many late-Roman villas.

Orphism is the name given to a set of religious beliefs and practices^[1] originating in the ancient Greek and Hellenistic world, associated with literature ascribed to the mythical poet Orpheus, who descended into the Greek underworld and returned. Orphism has been described as a reform of the earlier Dionysian religion, involving a re-interpretation or re-reading of the myth of Dionysus and a re-ordering of Hesiod's Theogony, based in part on pre-Socratic philosophy.^[2]

The suffering and death of the god Dionysus at the hands of the Titans has been considered the central myth of Orphism. According to this myth, the infant Dionysus is killed, torn apart, and consumed by the Titans. In retribution, Zeus strikes the Titans with a thunderbolt, turning them to ash. From these ashes, humanity is born. In Orphic belief, this myth describes humanity as having a dual nature: body (Ancient Greek: σῶμα, romanized: *sōma*), inherited from the Titans, and a divine spark or soul (Ancient Greek: ψυχή, romanized: *psukhḗ*), inherited from Dionysus.^[3] In order to achieve salvation from the Titanic, material existence, one had to be initiated into the Dionysian mysteries and undergo teletē, a ritual purification and reliving of the suffering and death of the god.^[4] The uninitiated (Ancient Greek: ἀμύητος, romanized: *amúētos*), they believed, would be reincarnated indefinitely.^[5]

History

Orphism is named after the legendary poet-hero Orpheus, who was said to have originated the Mysteries of Dionysus.^[6] However, Orpheus was more closely associated with Apollo than to Dionysus in the earliest sources and iconography. According to some versions of his mythos, he was the son of Apollo, and during his last days, he shunned the worship of other gods and devoted himself to Apollo alone.^[7]

Origins

Nymphs Finding the Head of Orpheus (1900) by John William Waterhouse

Poetry containing distinctly Orphic beliefs has been traced back to the 6th century BC or at least 5th century BC, and graffiti of the 5th century BC apparently refers to "Orphics".^[8]^[9]^[10] The Derveni papyrus allows Orphic mythology to be dated to the end of the 5th century BC,^[11] and it is probably even older.^[12] Orphic views and practices are attested as by Herodotus, Euripides, and Plato. Plato refers to "Orpheus-initiators" (Ὀρφεοτελεστοί), and associated rites, although how far "Orphic" literature in general

related to these rites is not certain.[13]

Relationship to Pythagoreanism

Orphic views and practices have parallels to elements of Pythagoreanism, and various traditions hold that the Pythagoreans or Pythagoras himself authored early Orphic works; alternately, later philosophers believed that Pythagoras was an initiate of Orphism. The extent to which one movement may have influenced the other remains controversial.[14] Some scholars maintain that Orphism and Pythagoreanism began as separate traditions which later became confused and conflated due to a few similarities. Others argue that the two traditions share a common origin and can even be considered a single entity, termed "Orphico-Pythagoreanism." [15]

The belief that Pythagoreanism was a subset or direct descendant of Orphic religion existed by late antiquity, when Neoplatonist philosophers took the Orphic origin of Pythagorean teachings at face value. Proclus wrote:

all that Orpheus transmitted through secret discourses connected to the mysteries, Pythagoras learnt thoroughly when he completed the initiation at Libethra in Thrace, and Aglaophamus, the initiator, revealed to him the wisdom about the gods that Orpheus acquired from his mother Calliope.[16]

In the fifteenth century, the Neoplatonic Greek scholar Constantine Lascaris (who found the poem *Argonautica Orphica*) considered a Pythagorean Orpheus.[17] Bertrand Russell (1947) noted:

The Orphics were an ascetic sect; wine, to them, was only a symbol, as, later, in the Christian sacrament. The intoxication that they sought was that of "enthusiasm," of union with the god. They believed themselves, in this way, to acquire mystic knowledge not obtainable by ordinary means. This mystical element entered into Greek philosophy with Pythagoras, who was a reformer of Orphism as Orpheus was a reformer of the religion of Dionysus. From Pythagoras Orphic elements entered into the philosophy of Plato, and from Plato into most later philosophy that was in any degree religious.[18] Study of early Orphic and Pythagorean sources, however, is more ambiguous concerning their relationship, and authors writing closer to Pythagoras' own lifetime never mentioned his supposed initiation into Orphism, and in general regarded Orpheus himself as a mythological figure.[15] Despite this, even these authors of the 5th and 4th centuries BC noted a strong similarity between the two doctrines. In fact, some claimed that rather than being an initiate of Orphism, Pythagoras was actually the original author of the first Orphic texts. Specifically, Ion of Chios claimed that Pythagoras authored poetry which he attributed to the mythical Orpheus, and Epigenes, in his *On Works Attributed to Orpheus*, attributed the authorship of several influential Orphic poems to notable early Pythagoreans, including Cercops.[15] According to Cicero, Aristotle also claimed that Orpheus never existed, and that the Pythagoreans ascribed some Orphic poems to Cercon (see Cercops).[19]

Belief in metempsychosis was common to both currents, although it also seems to

contain differences. Where the Orphics taught about a cycle of grievous embodiments that could be escaped through their rites, Pythagoras seemed to teach about an eternal, neutral metempsychosis against which personal actions would be irrelevant.[20]

The Neoplatonists regarded the theology of Orpheus, carried forward through Pythagoreanism, as the core of the original Greek religious tradition. Proclus, an influential neoplatonic philosopher, one of the last major classical philosophers of late antiquity, says

"For all the Grecian theology is the progeny of the mystic tradition of Orpheus; Pythagoras first of all learning from Aglaophemus the rites of the Gods, but Plato in the second place receiving an all-perfect science of the divinities from the Pythagoric and Orphic writings."

(trans. Thomas Taylor, 1816)[21]

Orphic literature

Nymphs Listening to the Songs of Orpheus (1853) by Charles Jalabert

A number of Greek religious poems in hexameters were attributed to Orpheus, though only a few such works are extant. Lost Orphic poems, which may date back as far as the sixth century BC, survive only in papyrus fragments or in quotations.[22]

Theogonies

The Orphic theogonies are works which present accounts of the origin of the gods, much like the Theogony of Hesiod. These theogonies are symbolically similar to Near Eastern models.

The main story has it that Zagreus, Dionysus' previous incarnation, is the son of Zeus and Persephone. Zeus names the child as his successor, which angers his wife Hera. She instigates the Titans to murder the child. Zagreus is then tricked with a mirror and children's toys by the Titans, who shred him to pieces and consume him. Athena saves the heart and tells Zeus of the crime, who in turn hurls a thunderbolt on the Titans. The resulting soot, from which sinful mankind is born, contains the bodies of the Titans and Zagreus. The soul of man (the Dionysus part) is therefore divine, but the body (the Titan part) holds the soul in bondage. Thus, it was declared that the soul returns to a host ten times, bound to the wheel of rebirth. Following the punishment, the dismembered limbs of Zagreus were cautiously collected by Apollo who buried them in his sacred land Delphi.

There are two Orphic stories of the rebirth of Dionysus: in one it is the heart of Dionysus that is implanted into the thigh of Zeus; in the other Zeus has impregnated the mortal woman Semele, resulting in Dionysus's literal rebirth. Many of these details differ from accounts in the classical authors. Damascius says that Apollo "gathers him (Dionysus) together and brings him back up".

The main difference seems to be in the primordial succession:[23]

In the Eudemian Theogony (5th century BC),[24] the first being to exist is Night (Nyx). [25]

In the Rhapsodic Theogony, it starts with Chronos ('Unageing Time', different from Kronos, Zeus' father) who gives birth to Ether and Chaos, and then lays the egg from which Phanes/Protogonos arises.

In the Hieronyman Theogony, the egg arises from soil (more specifically 'the matter out of which earth was coagulated') and water, and it is 'Unageing Time' Kronos which arises from it, and gives birth to Ether, Chaos and Erebus. Then Kronos lays a new egg in Chaos, from which arises Protogonos.

In the Derveni Theogony, the Night lays the egg from which Protogonos arises, he then give birth to Ouranos & Gaia, which give birth to Kronos, himself father of Zeus who end up swallowing the primordial egg of Protogonos and recreating the Universe in the process.

But there are other differences, notably in the treatment of Dionysos:[23]

In the Rhapsodic Theogony, Dionysos is dismembered and cooked by the Titans before Zeus struck them with lightning (mankind then arises from the soot, and Dionysos is resurrected from his preserved heart).

The Derveni Papyrus being fragmentary, the story stops without having mentioned him.

The Hieronyman Theogony does not include Dionysos being eaten by the Titans, as both sources for the work (Damascius and Athenagoras) do not mention it, despite the latter describing the war on the Titans.

In later centuries, these versions underwent a development where Apollo's act of burying became responsible for the reincarnation of Dionysus, thus giving Apollo the title Dionysiodotes (bestower of Dionysus).[26] Apollo plays an important part in the dismemberment myth because he represents the reverting of Encosmic Soul towards unification.[27][28]

Jacob Bryant's Orphic Egg (1774) with Ananke

In Orphic theogonies, the Orphic Egg is a cosmic egg from which hatched the primordial hermaphroditic deity Phanes/Protogonos (variously equated also with Zeus, Pan, Metis, Eros, Erikepaïos and Bromius), who in turn created the other gods.[29] The egg is often depicted with the serpent-like creature, Ananke, wound about it. Phanes is the golden winged primordial being who was hatched from the shining cosmic egg that was the source of the universe.

Derveni papyrus

Main article: Derveni papyrus

The Derveni papyrus, found in Derveni, Macedonia (Greece), in 1962, contains a philosophical treatise that is an allegorical commentary on an Orphic poem in hexameters, a theogony concerning the birth of the gods, produced in the circle of the philosopher Anaxagoras, written in the second half of the fifth century BC. Fragments of

the poem are quoted making it "the most important new piece of evidence about Greek philosophy and religion to come to light since the Renaissance".[30] The papyrus dates to around 340 BC, during the reign of Philip II of Macedon, making it Europe's oldest surviving manuscript.

Gold tablets

See also: Totenpass

Gold orphic tablet and case found in Petelia, southern Italy (British Museum)[31] Surviving written fragments show a number of beliefs about the afterlife similar to those in the "Orphic" mythology about Dionysus' death and resurrection. Bone tablets found in Olbia (5th century BC) carry short and enigmatic inscriptions like: "Life. Death. Life. Truth. Dio(nysus). Orphics." The function of these bone tablets is unknown.[32]

Gold-leaf tablets found in graves from Thurii, Hipponium, Thessaly and Crete (4th century BC and after) give instructions to the dead. Although these thin tablets are often highly fragmentary, collectively they present a shared scenario of the passage into the afterlife. When the deceased arrives in the underworld, he is expected to confront obstacles. He must take care not to drink of Lethe ("Forgetfulness"), but of the pool of Mnemosyne ("Memory"). He is provided with formulaic expressions with which to present himself to the guardians of the afterlife. As said in the Petelia tablet:

I am a son of Earth and starry sky. I am parched with thirst and am dying; but quickly grant me cold water from the Lake of Memory to drink.[33]

Other gold leaves offer instructions for addressing the rulers of the underworld:

Now you have died and now you have come into being, O thrice happy one, on this same day. Tell Persephone that the Bacchic One himself released you.[34]

Extant works

The Orphic Hymns are 87 hexametric poems of a shorter length composed in the Roman Imperial age.

The Orphic Argonautica (Ancient Greek: Ὀρφικὴς Ἀργοναυτικά) is a Greek epic poem dating from the 4th century CE of unknown authorship.[35] It is narrated in the first person in the name of Orpheus and tells the story of Jason and the Argonauts. The narrative is basically similar to that in other versions of the story, such as the Argonautica of Apollonius Rhodius, on which it is probably based. The main differences are the emphasis on the role of Orpheus and a more mythological, less realistic technique of narration. In the Argonautica Orphica, unlike in Apollonius Rhodius, it is claimed that the Argo was the first ship ever built.

Notes

Sexuality in Greek and Roman Culture by Marilyn B. Skinner, 2005, page 135, "[...] of

life, there was no coherent religious movement properly termed 'Orphism' (Dodds 1957: 147–9; West 1983: 2–3). Even if there were, [...]"

A. Henrichs, "'Hieroi Logoi' and 'Hierai Bibloi': The (Un) Written Margins of the Sacred in Ancient Greece," *Harvard Studies in Classical Philology* 101 (2003): 213-216.

Sandys, John, *Pindar. The Odes of Pindar including the Principal Fragments*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; London, William Heinemann Ltd, 1937.

Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, *Rituales órficos* (Madrid: Universidad Complutense de Madrid, 2006);

Proclus, *Commentary on the Republic of Plato*, II, 338, 17 Kern 224.

Apollodorus (Pseudo Apollodorus), *Library and Epitome*, 1.3.2. "Orpheus also invented the mysteries of Dionysus, and having been torn in pieces by the Maenads he is buried in Pieria."

Alberto Bernabé, Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui, Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, Raquel Martín Hernández, *Redefining Dionysos*

Guthrie 1955, p. 322.

Kirk, Raven & Schofield 1983, pp. 21, 30–31.

Parker 1995, pp. 485, 497.

"The Derveni Papyrus: An Interdisciplinary Research Project". Harvard University, Center for Hellenic Studies. 2 November 2020. Archived from the original on 30 July 2017. Retrieved 24 May 2015.

Kirk, Raven & Schofield 1983, pp. 30–31.

Parker 1995, p. 484, 487.

Parker 1995, p. 501.

Betegh 2014.

Proclus, *Tim.* 3.168.8

Russo, Attilio (2004). "Costantino Lascaris tra fama e oblio nel Cinquecento messinese", in *Archivio Storico Messinese*, pp. 53-54.

Bertrand Russell (1947). *History of Western Philosophy*. George Allen and Unwin. p. 37.

Aristotle (1908). *The works of Aristotle*. Translated by Ross, W. D. p. 80.

Leonid Zhmud (2012). *Pythagoras and the Early Pythagoreans*. OUP Oxford. pp. 232–233. ISBN 978-0-19-928931-8.

"Proclus, in *Theologian Platonis* I.5 (I.25-26, Saffrey-Westerink) = Orph. 507 IV Bernabé - *Living Poets*".

Freeman, Kathleen. *Ancilla to the Pre-Socratic Philosophers*, Harvard University Press (1948), p. 1.

Richardson 1985, pp. 87–90.

Meisner 2018, p. 1.

Betegh 2007, p. 146.

Alberto Bernabé, Miguel Herrero de Jáuregui, Ana Isabel Jiménez San Cristóbal, Raquel Martín Hernández. (2013), *Redefining Dionysos*

Proclus in commentary on Cratylus states that Apollo signifies the cause of unity and that which reassembles many into one

Meisner 2018.

West 1983, p. 205.

Janko, Richard (2006). Tsantsanoglou, K.; Parássoglou, G.M.; Kouremenos, T. (eds.). "The Derveni Papyrus". *Bryn Mawr Classical Review*. Studi e testi per il 'Corpus dei papiri filosofici greci e latini'. 13. Florence: Olschki.

British Museum Collection

Sider & Obbink 2013, p. 160.

Numerous tablets contain this essential formula with minor variations; for the Greek texts and translations, see Graf & Johnston 2007 pp. 4–5 (Hipponion, 400 BC), 6–7 (Petelia, 4th century BC), pp. 16–17 (Entella, possibly 3rd century BC), pp. 20–25 (five tablets from Eleutherna, Crete, 2nd or 1st century BC), pp. 26–27 (Mylopotamos, 2nd century BC), pp. 28–29 (Rethymnon, 2nd or 1st century BC), pp. 34–35 (Pharsalos, Thessaly, 350–300 BC), and pp. 40–41 (Thessaly, mid-4th century BC)

Tablet from Pelinna, late 4th century BC, in Graf & Johnston 2007, pp. 36–37

Meisner, p. 4. West, p. 37 states that "it can hardly be earlier and may well be later than the fourth century AD".

Bibliography

Editions and translations

Athanassakis, Apostolos N. *Orphic Hymns: Text, Translation, and Notes*. Missoula: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature, 1977. ISBN 978-0-89130-119-6

Bernabé, Albertus (ed.), *Orphicorum et Orphicis similium testimonia et fragmenta*.

Poetae Epici Graeci. Pars II. Fasc. 1. Bibliotheca Teubneriana, München/Leipzig: K.G. Saur, 2004. ISBN 3-598-71707-5

Kern, Otto. *Orphicorum fragmenta*, Berolini apud Weidmannos, 1922.

Graf, Fritz; Johnston, Sarah (2007). *Ritual Texts for the Afterlife: Orpheus and the Bacchic Gold Tablets*. Routledge. ISBN 978-0-415-41550-7. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

References

Betegh, Gábor (19 November 2007). *The Derveni Papyrus: Cosmology, Theology and Interpretation*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-04739-5. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Betegh, Gábor (24 April 2014). "Pythagoreans, Orphism and Greek Religion". In Huffman, Carl A. (ed.). *A History of Pythagoreanism*. Cambridge University Press. pp. 149–66. ISBN 978-1-139-91598-4.

Guthrie, William Keith Chambers (1935). *Orpheus and Greek Religion: A Study of the Orphic Movement*. Methuen & Company, Limited.

Guthrie, William Keith Chambers (1955). *The Greeks and Their Gods*. by W.K.C.

Guthrie. Beacon Press. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Kirk, G. S.; Raven, J. E.; Schofield, M. (29 December 1983). *The Presocratic Philosophers: A Critical History with a Selection of Texts*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-27455-5.

Meisner, Dwayne A. (2018). *Orphic Tradition and the Birth of the Gods*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-066352-0. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Sider, David; Obbink, Dirk (30 October 2013). *Doctrine and Doxography*. Walter de Gruyter. ISBN 978-3-11-033137-0.

Richardson, N. J. (1985). "The Orphic Poems". *The Classical Review*. 35 (1): 87–90. doi:10.1017/S0009840X00107474. JSTOR 3063696. S2CID 162276006.

Parker, Robert (1995). "Early Orphism". In Powell, Anton (ed.). *The Greek World*.

Psychology Press. pp. 483–510. ISBN 978-0-415-06031-8. Retrieved 10 August 2023.
West, Martin Litchfield (1983). *The Orphic Poems*. Clarendon Press. ISBN 978-0-19-814854-8. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Further reading

Articles on Orphism

Bernabé, Alberto. "Some Thoughts about the 'New' Gold Tablet from Pherai." *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* 166 (2008): 53–58.

Bremmer, Jan. "Orphism, Pythagoras, and the Rise of the Immortal Soul". *The Rise and Fall of the Afterlife: The 1995 Read-Tuckwell Lectures at the University of Bristol*. New York: Routledge, 2002. 11–26. ISBN 978-0-415-14147-5

Bremmer, Jan. "Rationalization and Disenchantment in Ancient Greece: Max Weber among the Pythagoreans and Orphics?" *From Myth to Reason: Studies in the Development of Greek Thought*. Ed. Richard Buxton. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999. 71–83.

Bremmer, Jan N. (2013). "Divinities in the Orphic Gold Leaves: Euklês, Eubouleus, Brimo, Kybele, Kore and Persephone". *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik*. 187: 35–48. JSTOR 23850747.

Comparetti, Domenico, and Cecil Smith. "The Petelia Gold Tablet". *The Journal of Hellenic Studies* 3 (1882): 111–18.

Edmonds, Radcliffe. "Tearing Apart the Zagreus Myth: A Few Disparaging Remarks on Orphism and Original Sin." *Classical Antiquity* 18.1 (1999): 35–73. PDF.

Finkelberg, Aryeh. "On the Unity of Orphic and Milesian Thought". *The Harvard Theological Review* 79 (1986): 321–35. ISSN 0017-8160

Graf, Fritz. "Dionysian and Orphic Eschatology: New Texts and Old Questions". *Masks of Dionysus*. Ed. T. Carpenter and C. Faraone. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1993. 239–58, ISSN 0012-9356.

Fulińska, Agnieszka (1 January 1970). "Dionysos, Orpheus and Argead Macedonia: Overview and Perspectives". *Classica Cracoviensia*. 17: 43–67.
doi:10.12797/CC.17.2014.17.03.

Robertson, Noel. "Orphic Mysteries and Dionysiac Ritual." *Greek Mysteries: the Archaeology and Ritual of Ancient Greek Secret Cults*. Ed. Michael B. Cosmopoulos. New York: Routledge, 2004. 218–40, ISBN 978-0-415-24872-3.

Torjussen, Stian (September 2005). "Phanes and Dionysos in the Derveni Theogony". *Symbolae Osloenses*. 80 (1): 7–22. doi:10.1080/00397670600684691. S2CID 170976252.

West, Martin L. "Graeco-Oriental Orphism in the 3rd cent. BC". *Assimilation et résistance à la culture Gréco-romaine dans le monde ancien: Travaux du VIe Congrès International d'Etudes Classiques*. Ed.D. M. Pippidi. Paris: Belles Lettres, 1976. 221–26.
Books on Orphism

Alderink, Larry J. (1981). *Creation and Salvation in Ancient Orphism*. American Philological Association. ISBN 978-0-89130-502-6. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Bernabé, Alberto; Cristóbal, Ana Isabel Jiménez San (30 January 2008). *Instructions for the Netherworld: The Orphic Gold Tablets*. BRILL. ISBN 978-90-474-2374-4. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Brisson, Luc (1995). *Orphée Et L'orphisme Dans L'antiquité Gréco-romaine*. Variorum.

ISBN 978-0-86078-453-1. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Burkert, Walter. "Craft Versus Sect: The Problem of Orphics and Pythagoreans". *Jewish and Christian Self-Definition: Volume Three - Self-Definition in the Greco-Roman World*. Ed. B. Meyer and E. P. Sanders. Philadelphia: Fortress, 1982.

Carratelli, Giovanni Pugliese (2001). *Le lamine d'oro orfiche: istruzioni per il viaggio oltremondano degli iniziati greci* (in Italian). Adelphi. ISBN 978-88-459-1663-2. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Chrysanthou, Anthi (20 April 2020). *Defining Orphism: The Beliefs, the 'teletae' and the Writings*. Walter de Gruyter GmbH & Co KG. ISBN 978-3-11-067845-1. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Edmonds, Radcliffe G. (20 September 2004). *Myths of the Underworld Journey: Plato, Aristophanes, and the 'Orphic' Gold Tablets*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-0-521-83434-6. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Edmonds, Radcliffe G. (7 November 2013). *Redefining Ancient Orphism: A Study in Greek Religion*. Cambridge University Press. ISBN 978-1-107-03821-9. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Graf, Fritz (1974). *Eleusis und die orphische Dichtung Athens in vorhellenistischer Zeit* (in German). Walter de Gruyter. ISBN 978-3-11-004498-0. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Jáuregui, Miguel Herrero de (26 March 2010). *Orphism and Christianity in Late Antiquity*. Walter de Gruyter. ISBN 978-3-11-021660-8. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Jáuregui, Miguel Herrero de; Cristóbal, Ana Isabel Jiménez San; Martínez, Eugenio R. Luján; Hernández, Raquel Martín; Álvarez, Marco Antonio Santamaría; Tovar, Sofía Torallas (8 December 2011). *Tracing Orpheus: Studies of Orphic Fragments*. Walter de Gruyter. ISBN 978-3-11-026053-3.

Linforth, Ivan Mortimer (1973). *The Arts of Orpheus*. Arno Press. ISBN 978-0-405-04847-0. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

General studies

Albinus, L. (2000). *The house of Hades: Studies in ancient Greek eschatology*. Aarhus [Denmark: Aarhus University Press. ISBN 978-87-7288-833-0

Burkert, Walter (2004). *Babylon, Memphis, Persepolis: Eastern Contexts of Greek Culture*. Harvard University Press. ISBN 978-0-674-01489-3. Retrieved 10 August 2023.

Martin, Luther H. *Hellenistic Religions: An Introduction* 1987, 102, ISBN 978-0-19-504390-7.

Russo, Attilio (2004). "Costantino Lascaris tra fama e oblio nel Cinquecento messinese", *Archivio Storico Messinese*, Messina 2003–2004, LXXXIV-LXXXV, 5–87, especially 53–54.

Sournia Alain. Chap. "Sapesses orientale et philosophie occidentale : la période axiale" in *Fondements d'une philosophie sauvage*. Connaissances et savoirs, 2012, 300 p., ISBN 978-2-7539-0187-2.

Zuntz, Günther. *Persephone: Three Essays on Religion and Thought in Magna Graecia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, ISBN 978-0-19-814286-7.

vte

Ancient Greek religion and mythology

vte

Paganism (and modern paganism)

Categories: Ancient Greek religionGreco-Roman mysteriesOrpheusCult of DionysusPersephone

This page was last edited on 5 October 2025, at 22:35 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

Skip to main contentAccessibility help

Accessibility feedback

Seasonal Holidays 2025

Mithraic)

AI Mode

All

Images

Shopping

Videos

News

Short videos

More

Tools

AI Overview

Mithraism - World History Encyclopedia

Mithraic refers to the secret Roman mystery cult of Mithras, a deity linked to light, contracts, and order, popular among soldiers, merchants, and slaves from the 1st to 4th centuries AD, known for its seven-tiered initiation, underground temples (mithraea), and iconic imagery of Mithras slaying a bull (tauroctony). As a secretive religion with few written records, knowledge comes mainly from archaeology, showing its rise, popularity with Roman soldiers, rituals like communal meals, and eventual decline under Christian pressure.

Key Aspects of Mithraism

Deity: Mithras, an Indo-Iranian god associated with contracts, truth, and light, later syncretized with the Roman sun god Sol Invictus.

Practices: Involved secret initiation rites, communal meals, and a seven-grade system (Raven, Bridegroom, Soldier, Lion, Persian, Sun-Runner, Father) linked to planets.

Temples: Met in windowless, underground temples called mithraea, often built to resemble caves, decorated with art.

Iconography: The central image is the tauroctony, Mithras sacrificing a bull, surrounded by symbolic animals like a dog, snake, and scorpion, often with torchbearers Cautes and Cautopates.

Followers: Popular with Roman soldiers, merchants, and slaves, offering camaraderie and a path to spiritual enlightenment.

Origins & Decline: Originated in the Roman world (late 1st century CE) with unclear links to Persian traditions; declined in the 4th century with the rise of Christianity.

Mithraic vs. Persian Mithra

While sharing a name and some concepts (light, oaths), the Roman Mithras and Persian Mithra (from Zoroastrianism) are distinct, with the Roman version being a unique, secretive cult developed within the Roman Empire.

Legacy

Mithraism left behind numerous archaeological sites (Mithraea) across the Roman Empire, providing rich evidence for its practices, despite the lack of internal texts.

Cult of Mithras | History, Rituals & Significance - Lesson - Study.com

Mithras the Roman God ... The Persian Mithra was believed to be the god of light, oath, and truth, seen as the divine embodiment o...

Study.com

What is Mithraism? | GotQuestions.org

Further, all of the Mithraic manuscripts that ascribe Christian-like beliefs/practices to Mithraism are dated to long after the ra...

GotQuestions.org

What Is Mithraism? The Secretive Cult That Swept the Roman World

Roman Mithras is commonly portrayed ritually sacrificing a bull. Known as the "tauroctony," this iconography is common to Mithraic...

TheCollector

Show all

Show more

Mithraism

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mithraism>

Mithraism, also known as the Mithraic mysteries or the Cult of Mithras, was a Roman mystery religion focused on the god Mithras.

Comparisons with...

Mithraeum

Tauroctony

Arimanius

People also ask

What is the meaning of Mithraic?

Does Mithraism still exist?

What are the 7 stages of Mithraism?

What was Mithras the god of?

Feedback

The Roman cult of Mithras

The Tertullian Project

<https://mithras.tertullian.org>

The Roman deity Mithras appears in the historical record in the late 1st century AD, and disappears from it in the late 4th century AD.

Things to know

Core Beliefs

.

What are the core beliefs of Mithraism?

Rituals and Practices

.

What are the rituals and practices of Mithraism?

Origin

.

What is the origin of Mithraism?

Symbols

.

What are the symbols associated with Mithraism?

Mithraism | Definition, History, Mythology, & Facts

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com> › topic › Mithraism

Nov 28, 2025 — Mithraism, the worship of Mithra, the Iranian god of the sun, justice, contract, and war in pre-Zoroastrian Iran. Known as Mithras in the ...

What people are saying

What came first? Christianity or Mithraism?

Popular comment · 2/ When it comes to the 'parallels', we have something of a problem. The idea that there are a number of impressive parallels between Mithraism and Christianity is, at best, overstated and, at worst, simply made up. When people talk about parallels like resurrection, virgin birth, or December 25, they project later Christian ideas onto minimal Mithraic material. Roman Mithraism had no narrative scripture, for example. It had no mythic biography of Mithras beyond a set of ritual scenes, like the birth from a stone, the bull killing, and the banquet with Sol. None of this matches Christian theology in any meaningful way beyond coincidence. Some Christian texts, like those of Justin Martyr, place Jesus' birth in a cave near Bethlehem. Mithras is shown emerging from a rock. Some people treat both as 'cave births', but the similarity is superficial. Mithras is not born of a woman, for instance, and so this is claimed as 'virgin birth in a cave'. Mithras and Sol share a banquet after the bull killing, and early Christians hold communal meals. That is as far as that comparison goes. Ritual feasting is common across all sorts of religions. There is no direct evidence that links this post bull killing feast to December 25 (or any particular date, come to that), and the link there largely comes from the association with Sol Invictus on that date. This date is essentially the winter solstice and marks the 'return' of the sun and hence the 'rebirth' of light. Jesus

is associated with being the 'light of the world', and rebirth, and so those two stories line up nicely. However, mid-winter is also a perfectly natural point in the calendar for people to celebrate, particularly as it marks a vital part in the natural cycle of all things. The only association with Mithras and this date is Mithras' dining with Sol. Nothing directly links Mithras to this date. Mithraism, like many Roman cults, encouraged virtues such as loyalty, truth, and discipline, as does Christianity. However, these are generic Greco-Roman ethical themes, not evidence of borrowing or deliberately shared ideology. Really, that's as far as any obvious parallels go, and further similarities are mostly much later constructs without much in the way of direct evidence. The Christ as Myth theory doesn't appear until well into the 18th Century, and it is only then that similarities between Mithras and Jesus start to be put forward as an idea that one is based on the other. Justin Martyr (him again!) suggests that the 'demonic' ceremonies carried out by the followers of Mithras were deliberately mocking the Christian Mass, and so it is possible that there was some overlap between such ceremonies. But, if this is true, it would suggest, particularly given the depth of archaeological evidence that wasn't available to excitable chaps in the 18th and 19th centuries, that Mithraism stole from Christianity, not the other way around. As with all such things, if one skims the surface of details looking for similarities, one can find things that match. But in doing so, one must also take into account all the things that do not match. Christianity has texts that tell a story about Jesus, whereas Mithraism has no such scriptures. It has rituals and a few fixed scenes in art, certainly, but there is no comparable mythic narrative. Mithras does not die, and subsequently, he does not rise again. There is no passion sequence, one of the fundamental cores of the Christian claim. Christianity is a religion with universal reach that is based on salvation. Mithraism is not about salvation from sin and is not universal. Instead, it is an exclusive initiation cult for small groups of men. As such, those men must undergo a series of graded initiation ceremonies, and Christianity has no such ladder. Christianity is monotheistic with a high moral God, whereas Mithras sits inside Roman polytheism. He interacts with Sol, for example, as an equal, not as a supreme power. The question wasn't really about similarities between the two religions, so to avoid wandering off on one of my usual rambles through the mazes of ancient religious symbology, I'll leave it there. But it is safe to say that Christianity predates the existence of the 'Mithraic Mysteries' in their Roman context, and they really don't appear to have much to do with each other at all.

.

10+ comments · 5 days ago

r/AskHistorians
Reddit

Mithras and Mithraism: San Clemente, Ostia Antica, and London
Oct 19, 2025

Agnes Crawford · Substack
Rome-based architectural history guide

1) Hundreds of years before Jesus, according to the Mithraic religion, three Wise Men of Persia came to visit the baby savior-god Mithra, bring him gifts of gold, myrrh and frankincense. 2) Mithra was born on December 25 as told in the "Great Religions of the World", page 330; "It was the winter solstice celebrated by ancients as the birthday of Mithraism's sun god". 3) According to Mithraism, before Mithra died on a cross, he celebrated a "Last Supper with his twelve disciples, who represented the twelve signs of the zodiac. 4) After the death of Mithra, his body was laid to rest in a rock tomb. 5) Mithra had a celibate priesthood. 6) Mithra ascended into heaven during the spring (Passover) equinox (the time when the sun crosses the equator making night and day of equal length) As you can now see, Christianity derived many of its essential elements from the ancient religion of Mithraism. Mithraism became intertwined with the cult of Jesus to form what is known today as "Christia

12.1K+ likes · 1 month ago

the.library.of.thomas · Instagram

Related to esoteric spirituality

Barberini Mitraeum was discovered by accident in 1936, during some construction work near Palazzo Barberini in the heart of Rome - Italy. Until then, the sanctuary had remained hidden under layers of more recent construction, preserving its extraordinary frescoes and original structure intact. The archaeologists were confronted with a perfectly recognizable room: a rectangular underground hall, with a barrel vault and two long masonry benches on either side, typical of mithraea. But it was the back wall that left everyone speechless: an exceptional pictorial cycle, among the most complete in Mithraism, dominated by the scene of tauroctonia - the ritual sacrifice of the bull by Mithras. Subsequent studies have confirmed that the mithraeum was carved out of a 2nd-century AD building, but its transformation into a place of Mithraic worship dates back to the 3rd century AD. This means that the sanctuary was active precisely during the heyday of the cult of Mithras in Rome. The Barber

490+ likes · 3 weeks ago

histories_arch

X

0:56

"Across the ancient world, long before Christianity, the story of a dying-and-rising god was already encoded into the mythic fabric of humanity. The earliest form of this archetype appears in the "Green Man"—the spirit of vegetation, death, and rebirth who rises each spring and descends each winter. He was humanity's first Jesus: a symbolic being whose resurrection was woven into the cycles of nature. The Green Man represented the eternal pattern of life renewing itself, a cosmic truth expressed thousands of years before the Gospels were written. His face carved into stone—leaves growing from his mouth—was the first proclamation that divinity dies, resurrects, and

returns. The cycle of Christ exists first as the cycle of the earth. From this primordial archetype evolved the figure of Mithras, the solar savior of the Roman world. Born from a virgin-like rock on December 25th, surrounded by shepherds, Mithras was a god of light who conquered darkness. His mythology was solar in every se

280+ likes · 1 week ago

wingedshoespublishing · Instagram
Kundalini & magick adept

By the early fourth century, Rome was exhausted. Its gods had become state property, its empire divided between rival Caesars, and its people spiritually fragmented. In the legions, merchants' guilds, and secret fraternities, a rival faith already thrived—Mithraism. The cult of Mithras, born from Persian-Zoroastrian fire worship and refined through Roman militarism, had temples under every major garrison from Britain to Syria. Its initiates shared sacred meals, marked their foreheads, believed in divine judgment, and honored the birth of their god on December 25th. The soldiers of the empire were already half-converted—only the names differed. When Constantine rose to power, he inherited a world where Mithras and Christ coexisted in the same barracks. His “vision of the cross” before the Battle of the Milvian Bridge in 312 CE was not a mystical revelation—it was the most brilliant political maneuver in imperial history. By merging the symbols of the sun cult with the theology of the C

330+ likes · 1 month ago

mystic_eb
Instagram

??? ANCIENT MYSTERY: The Cult of Mithra: Sacred Temples, and Vedic Legends, and Ancient Armenian Understanding ?? Trending with 100K+ readers! What do you think? ?? <https://www.ancient-origins.net/myths-legends/cult-mithra-sacred-temples-and-v>

40+ reactions · Sep 23, 2025

ancientoriginsweb · Facebook
Ancient history & archaeology news

Parthian Bronze censer with Mithraic motifs (c. 1st Century BCE).

90+ reactions · Oct 18, 2025

TheArchaeologistOfficial · Facebook
Hellenic civilization commentator

The Mithraic tauroctony—the scene of Mithras slaying the bull—was never about sacrifice or blood. It was a star map. Every element in the image corresponds to constellations: the bull is Taurus, the scorpion is Scorpius, the dog Canis, the serpent Hydra, the raven Corvus. Mithras himself stands where Perseus occupies the sky. The entire composition captures the moment when the sun's position shifted out of the Age of Taurus (c. 4000–2000 BCE) into Aries, a real astronomical precession event. To initiates, this wasn't mythology—it was cosmic governance: the belief that power belongs to those who understand the cycles of the heavens and align earthly rule to celestial timing. The underground Mithraea weren't temples—they were planetaria, lit by controlled apertures and oil lamps to recreate the night sky on stone. What looked like a secret cult of Roman soldiers was actually a network of astronomical schools hiding in plain sight. Mithras wasn't worshiped. He was studied. —Mystic E.B. p
140+ likes · 1 month ago

ancientknowledge_
Instagram

Mithras Slaying a Bull while a Dog and Snake Lap Up its Blood and a Scorpion Latches onto its Scrotum, 150–200 CE, Possibly Found in Rome. [1600x1087]
50+ comments · Sep 18, 2025

r/ArtefactPorn
Reddit

On this day in 1954, during an excavation on a post-war bomb site in the City of London, an archaeologist unearthed the beautifully preserved marble head of the god Mithras. This was the definitive proof that his team had found a Roman Mithraeum—a mystery
150+ reactions · Sep 18, 2025

livescience · Facebook
Science news website
CATHOLIC ENCYCLOPEDIA: Mithraism

New Advent
<https://www.newadvent.org> › cathen
A pagan religion consisting mainly of the cult of the ancient Indo-Iranian Sun-god Mithra. It entered Europe from Asia Minor after Alexander's conquest.
Mithraic | Raised by Wolves Wiki | Fandom

Raised by Wolves Wiki | Fandom
<https://raised-by-wolves.fandom.com> › wiki › Mithraic
The Mithraic are a religious faction dedicated to the sun god Sol that rose to power on Earth in the 22nd century. They were opposed by the Atheists,

The Cult of Mithras | Secret Societies 1 | Roman History | Extra ...

YouTube · Extra History

649.1K+ views · 1 year ago

11:24

Mithraism was a cult that attracted the Common People middle class and even slaves but it was also vastly popular in the Roman army.

Videos

History of Mithraism: Christianity's Main Rival

YouTube · Kings and Generals

Sep 18, 2025

YouTube · Kings and Generals

22:00

Mithraism, a mysterious mystery religion, was popular in the Roman Empire, competing with Christianity. It featured strict hierarchies, initiation rituals, and iconography with astrological allusions.

What was the Ancient Roman Cult of Mithras? #RomanEmpire ...

YouTube · PBS

Feb 20, 2025

YouTube · PBS

1:15

Mithras, a Persian deity, had a cult in Rome in the 2nd-3rd centuries CE. It was popular among the military and had unique underground temples.

Who is Mithras, The Ancient Cult of Rome: SMT Lore

YouTube · Tony4You

Feb 4, 2024

YouTube · Tony4You

14:20

Mithraism is commonly believed to have been the religion practiced by the Persians before Zoroastrianism entrance in the sixth Century BC.

Feedback

View all

What Is Mithraism? The Secretive Cult That Swept ...

TheCollector

<https://www.thecollector.com> › Ancient History

Nov 29, 2023 — Mithraism was an enigmatic cult religion that flourished in the Roman Empire between the 1st and 4th centuries CE.

MITHRAIC Definition & Meaning

Merriam-Webster

<https://www.merriam-webster.com> › dictionary › Mithraic

The meaning of MITHRAIC is of or relating to a mystery cult for men of Iranian origin that flourished in the late Roman empire.

People also search for

Mithras and Christianity

Mithraic Raised by Wolves

Mithraic temple

Mithraism today

Mithraic initiation

Mithraism and Zoroastrianism

Mithras similarities to Christianity

Mithraic Mysteries vtm

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

[Wikipedia](#)The Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

Mithraism

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
"Mithras" redirects here. For other uses, see Mithras (disambiguation).
Not to be confused with Mithridatism.

Double-faced Mithraic relief. Fiano Romano (Rome), 2nd to 3rd century CE (Louvre Museum).

Mithras killing the bull (c. 150 CE; Louvre-Lens)

Rock-born Mithras and Mithraic artifacts (Baths of Diocletian, Rome)

Mithraism, also known as the Mithraic mysteries or the Cult of Mithras, was a Roman mystery religion focused on the god Mithras. Although inspired by Iranian worship of the Zoroastrian divinity (yazata) Mithra, the Roman Mithras was linked to a new and distinctive imagery, and the degree of continuity between Persian and Greco-Roman practice remains debatable.[a] The mysteries were popular among the Imperial Roman army from the 1st to the 4th century AD.[2]

Worshippers of Mithras had a complex system of seven grades of initiation and communal ritual meals. Initiates called themselves syndexioi, those "united by the handshake".[b] They met in dedicated mithraea (singular mithraeum), underground temples that survive in large numbers. The cult appears to have had its centre in Rome,[3] and was popular throughout the western half of the empire, as far south as Roman Africa and Numidia, as far east as Roman Dacia, as far north as Roman Britain,[4] (pp26–27) and to a lesser extent in Roman Syria in the east.[3]

Mithraism is viewed as a rival of early Christianity.[5](p 147) In the 4th century, Mithraists faced persecution from Christians, and the religion was subsequently suppressed and eliminated in the Roman Empire by the end of the century.[6]

Numerous archaeological finds, including meeting places, monuments, and artifacts, have contributed to modern knowledge about Mithraism throughout the Roman Empire. [c] The iconic scenes of Mithras show him being born from a rock, slaughtering a bull, and sharing a banquet with the god Sol (the Sun). About 420 sites have yielded materials related to the cult. Among the items found are about 1000 inscriptions, 700 examples of the bull-killing scene (tauroctony), and about 400 other monuments.[4] (p xxi) It has been estimated that there would have been at least 680 mithraea in the city of Rome.[8][full citation needed] No written narratives or theology from the religion survive; limited information can be derived from the inscriptions and brief or passing references in Greek and Latin literature. Interpretation of the physical evidence remains problematic and contested.[d]

Name

The term "Mithraism" is a modern convention. Writers of the Roman era referred to it by phrases such as "Mithraic mysteries", "mysteries of Mithras" or "mysteries of the Persians".[1][e] Modern sources sometimes refer to the Roman religion as Roman

Mithraism or Western Mithraism to distinguish it from Persian worship of Mithra.[1][f]

Etymology

Main article: Mithras (name)

Bas-relief of the tauroctony of the mysteries, Metz, France

The name Mithras (Latin, equivalent to Greek Μίθρας[11]) is a form of Mithra, the name of an old, pre-Zoroastrian, and, later on, Zoroastrian, god[g][h] – a relationship understood by Mithraic scholars since the days of Franz Cumont.[i] An early example of the Greek form of the name is in a 4th century BCE work by Xenophon, the *Cyropaedia*, which is a biography of the Persian king Cyrus the Great.[13]

The exact form of a Latin or classical Greek word varies due to the grammatical process of inflection. There is archaeological evidence that in Latin worshippers wrote the nominative form of the god's name as "Mithras". Porphyry's Greek text *De Abstinentia* (Περὶ ἀποχῆς ἐμψύχων), has a reference to the now-lost histories of the Mithraic mysteries by Euboulus and Pallas, the wording of which suggests that these authors treated the name "Mithra" as an indeclinable foreign word.[j]

Related deity-names in other languages include:

Vedic Sanskrit Mitra, "friend, friendship", as the name of a god praised in the Rigveda. [15][16][k][17]

In Sanskrit, mitra is an unusual name of the sun god, mostly known as "Surya" or "Aditya", however.[18]

the form *mi-it-ra-*, found in an inscribed peace treaty between the Hittites and the kingdom of Mitanni, from about 1400 BCE.[l] between the king of the Hittites, Subbiluliuma, and the king of Mitanni, Mativaza. ... It is the earliest evidence of Mithras in Asia Minor.[18][19]

Iranian Mithra and Sanskrit Mitra are believed to come from the Indo-Iranian word *mitrás*, meaning "contract, agreement, covenant".[20]

Modern historians have different conceptions about whether these names refer to the same god or not. John R. Hinnells has written of Mitra / Mithra / Mithras as a single deity, worshipped in several different religions.[21] On the other hand, David Ulansey considers the bull-slaying Mithras to be a new god who began to be worshipped in the 1st century BCE, and to whom an old name was applied.[m]

Mary Boyce, an academic researcher on ancient Iranian religions, writes that even though Roman Mithraism seems to have had less Iranian content than ancient Romans or modern historians used to think, nonetheless "as the name Mithras alone shows, this content was of some importance".[n]

Iconography

Relief of Mithras as bull-slayer from Neuenheim near Heidelberg, framed by scenes from Mithras' life

Much about the cult of Mithras is only known from reliefs and sculptures. There have been many attempts to interpret this material.

Mithras-worship in the Roman Empire was characterized by images of the god slaughtering a bull. Other images of Mithras are found in the Roman temples, for instance Mithras banqueting with Sol, and depictions of the birth of Mithras from a rock. But the image of bull-slaying (tauroctony) is always in the central niche.[9](p 6) Textual sources for a reconstruction of the theology behind this iconography are very rare.[o] (See section Interpretations of the bull-slaying scene below.)

The practice of depicting the god slaying a bull seems to be specific to Roman Mithraism. According to David Ulansey, this is "perhaps the most important example" of evident difference between Iranian and Roman traditions: "... there is no evidence that the Iranian god Mithra ever had anything to do with killing a bull." [9](p 8)

Bull-slaying scene

See also: Tauroctony

In every mithraeum the centerpiece was a representation of Mithras killing a sacred bull, an act called the tauroctony.[p][q] The image may be a relief, or free-standing, and side details may be present or omitted. The centre-piece is Mithras clothed in Anatolian costume and wearing a Phrygian cap; who is kneeling on the exhausted bull, holding it by the nostrils[4](p 77) with his left hand, and stabbing it with his right. As he does so, he looks over his shoulder towards the figure of Sol. A dog and a snake reach up towards the blood. A scorpion seizes the bull's genitals. A raven is flying around or is sitting on the bull. One or three ears of wheat are seen coming out from the bull's tail, sometimes from the wound. The bull was often white. The god is sitting on the bull in an unnatural way with his right leg constraining the bull's hoof and the left leg is bent and resting on the bull's back or flank.[r] The two torch-bearers on either side are dressed like Mithras: Cautes with his torch pointing up, and Cautopates with his torch pointing down.[4](p 98–99)[24] Sometimes Cautes and Cautopates carry shepherds' crooks instead of torches. [25]

A Roman tauroctony relief from Aquileia (c. 175 CE; Kunsthistorisches Museum, Vienna) The event takes place in a cavern, into which Mithras has carried the bull, after having hunted it, ridden it and overwhelmed its strength.[4](p 74) Sometimes the cavern is surrounded by a circle, on which the twelve signs of the zodiac appear. Outside the cavern, top left, is Sol the sun, with his flaming crown, often driving a quadriga. A ray of light often reaches down to touch Mithras. At the top right is Luna, with her crescent moon, who may be depicted driving a biga.[26]

In some depictions, the central tauroctony is framed by a series of subsidiary scenes to

the left, top and right, illustrating events in the Mithras narrative; Mithras being born from the rock, the water miracle, the hunting and riding of the bull, meeting Sol who kneels to him, shaking hands with Sol and sharing a meal of bull-parts with him, and ascending to the heavens in a chariot.[26] In some instances, as is the case in the stucco icon at Santa Prisca Mithraeum in Rome, the god is shown heroically nude.[s] Some of these reliefs were constructed so that they could be turned on an axis. On the reverse was another, more elaborate feasting scene. This indicates that the bull killing scene was used in the first part of the celebration, then the relief was turned, and the second scene was used in the second part of the celebration.[28] Besides the main cult icon, a number of mithraea had several secondary tauroctonies, and some small portable versions, probably meant for private devotion, have also been found.[29]

Banquet

The second most important scene after the tauroctony in Mithraic art is the so-called banquet scene.[30](pp 286–287) The banquet scene features Mithras and Sol Invictus banqueting on the hide of the slaughtered bull.[30](pp 286–287) On the specific banquet scene on the Fiano Romano relief, one of the torchbearers points a caduceus towards the base of an altar, where flames appear to spring up. Robert Turcan has argued that since the caduceus is an attribute of Mercury, and in mythology Mercury is depicted as a psychopomp, the eliciting of flames in this scene is referring to the dispatch of human souls and expressing the Mithraic doctrine on this matter.[31] Turcan also connects this event to the tauroctony: The blood of the slain bull has soaked the ground at the base of the altar, and from the blood the souls are elicited in flames by the caduceus.[31]

Birth from a rock

Mithras rising from the rock (National Museum of Romanian History)

Mithras born from the rock (c. 186 CE; Baths of Diocletian)

Mithras is depicted as being born from a rock. He is often shown as emerging from a rock, already in his youth, with a dagger in one hand and a torch in the other. He is nude, standing with his legs together, and is wearing a Phrygian cap.[32]

In some variations, he is shown coming out of the rock as a child, and in one holds a globe in one hand; sometimes a thunderbolt is seen. There are also depictions in which flames are shooting from the rock and also from Mithras' cap. One statue had its base perforated so that it could serve as a fountain, and the base of another has the mask of a water god. Sometimes Mithras also has other weapons such as bows and arrows, and there are also animals such as dogs, serpents, dolphins, eagles, other birds, lions, crocodiles, lobsters and snails around. On some reliefs, there is a bearded figure identified as the water god Oceanus, and on some there are the gods of the four winds. In these reliefs, the four elements could be invoked together. Sometimes Victoria, Luna, Sol, and Saturn also seem to play a role. Saturn in particular is often seen handing over the dagger or short sword to Mithras, used later in the tauroctony.[32]

In some depictions, Cautes and Cautopates are also present; sometimes they are depicted as shepherds.[33]

On some occasions, an amphora is seen, and a few instances show variations like an egg birth or a tree birth. Some interpretations show that the birth of Mithras was celebrated by lighting torches or candles.[32][34]

Lion-headed figure

Main article: Arimanius

Lion-headed figure from the Sidon Mithraeum (500 CE; CIMRM[35] 78 & 79; Louvre)
One of the most characteristic and poorly-understood features of the Mysteries is the naked lion-headed figure often found in Mithraic temples, named by the modern scholars with descriptive terms such as leontocephaline (lion-headed) or leontocephalus (lion-head).

His body is a naked man's, entwined by a serpent (or two serpents, like a caduceus), with the snake's head often resting on the lion's head. The lion's mouth is often open. He is usually represented as having four wings, two keys (sometimes a single key), and a sceptre in his hand. Sometimes the figure is standing on a globe inscribed with a diagonal cross. On the figure from the Ostia Antica Mithraeum (left, CIMRM[35] 312), the four wings carry the symbols of the four seasons, and a thunderbolt is engraved on his chest. At the base of the statue are the hammer and tongs of Vulcan and Mercury's cock and wand (caduceus). A rare variation of the same figure is also found with a human head and a lion's head emerging from its chest.[36][37]

Although animal-headed figures are prevalent in contemporary Egyptian and Gnostic mythological representations, no exact parallel to the Mithraic leontocephaline figure has been found.[36]

Based on dedicatory inscriptions for altars, the name of the figure is conjectured to be Arimanius, a Latinized form of the name Ahriman[t] – perplexingly, a demonic figure in the Zoroastrian pantheon. Arimanius is known from inscriptions to have been a god in the Mithraic cult as seen, for example, in images from the *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (CIMRM[35]) such as CIMRM[35] 222 from Ostia, CIMRM 369 from Rome, and CIMRM[35] 1773 and 1775 from Pannonia.[38]

Some scholars identify the lion-man as Aion, or Zurvan, or Cronus, or Chronos, while others assert that it is a version of the Zoroastrian Ahriman or the more benign Vedic Aryaman.[u] Although the exact identity of the lion-headed figure is debated by scholars, it is largely agreed that the god is associated with time and seasonal change.[40](p 94)

Rituals and worship

According to M.J. Vermaseren and C.C. van Essen, the Mithraic New Year and the

birthday of Mithras was on 25 December.[v][w] Beck disagreed strongly.[43](p 299, note 12) Clauss states: "The Mithraic Mysteries had no public ceremonies of its own. The festival of Natalis Invicti, held on 25 December, was a general festival of the Sun, and by no means specific to the Mysteries of Mithras."[44]

Mithraic initiates were required to swear an oath of secrecy and dedication.[45]

Mithras was thought to be a "warrior hero" similar to Greek heroes.[46]

Mithraic catechism

Apparently, some grade rituals involved the recital of a catechism, wherein the initiate was asked a series of questions pertaining to the initiation symbolism and had to reply with specific answers. An example of such a catechism, apparently pertaining to the Leo grade, was discovered in a fragmentary Egyptian papyrus (Papyrus Berolinensis 21196), [45][47] and reads:

Verso

[...] He will say: 'Where [...]?'

'[...] is he at a loss there?' Say: '[...]

[...] Say: 'Night'. He will say: 'Where [...]?'

[...] Say: 'All things [...]

'[...] are you called?' Say: 'Because of the summery [...]

[...] having become [...] he/it has the fiery ones

'[...] did you receive?' Say: 'In a pit'. He will say: 'Where is your [...]?'

'[...] [in the] Leonteion.' He will say: 'Will you gird [...]?'

'[...] death'. He will say: 'Why, having girded yourself, [...]?'

[...] this [has?] four tassels.

Recto

Very sharp and [...]

[...] much. He will say: '[...]?'

'[...] of the hot and cold'. He will say: '[...]?'

'[...] red [...] linen'. He will say: 'Why?' Say:

[...] red border; the linen, however, [...]

'[...] has been wrapped?' Say: 'The savior's [...]

He will say: 'Who is the father?' Say: 'The one who [begets] everything [...]

[He will say: 'How] did you become a Leo?' Say: 'By the [...] of the father [...]

Say: 'Drink and food'. He will say: '[...]?'

[...] in the seven-[...]

Mithraic relief with original colors (reconstitution), c. 140–160 CE; from Argentoratum. Strasbourg Archaeological Museum.

Almost no Mithraic scripture or first-hand account of its rituals survives;[o] with the exception of the aforementioned oath and catechism, and the document known as the Mithras Liturgy, from 4th century Egypt, whose status as a Mithraist text has been questioned by scholars including Franz Cumont.[x][48] The walls of mithraea were

commonly whitewashed, and where this survives, it tends to carry extensive repositories of graffiti; and these, together with inscriptions on Mithraic monuments, form the main source for Mithraic texts.[49]

Feasting

The archaeology of numerous mithraea indicates that most rituals were associated with feasting – as eating utensils and food residues are often found. These tend to include both animal bones and also very large quantities of fruit residues.[4](p 115) The presence of large numbers of cherry-stones in particular would tend to confirm mid-summer (late June, early July) as a season especially associated with Mithraic festivities. The Virunum album, in the form of an inscribed bronze plaque, records a Mithraic festival of commemoration as taking place on 26 June 184. Beck argues that religious celebrations on this date are indicative of special significance being given to the summer solstice; but this time of the year coincides with ancient recognition of the solar maximum at midsummer, when iconographically identical holidays such as Fors Fortuna (ancient Rome), Saint John's Eve, and Jāņi (Lithuania) are also observed.

For their feasts, Mithraic initiates reclined on stone benches arranged along the longer sides of the mithraeum – typically there might be room for 15 to 30 diners, but very rarely many more than 40 men.[4](p 43) Counterpart dining rooms, or triclinia, were to be found above ground in the precincts of almost any temple or religious sanctuary in the Roman empire, and such rooms were commonly used for their regular feasts by Roman 'clubs', or collegia. Mithraic feasts probably performed a very similar function for Mithraists as the collegia did for those entitled to join them; indeed, since qualification for Roman collegia tended to be restricted to particular families, localities or traditional trades, Mithraism may have functioned in part as providing clubs for the unclubbed.[50] The size of the mithraeum is not necessarily an indication of the size of the congregation.[27](pp 12,36)

Altars, iconography, and suspected doctrinal diversity

Each mithraeum had several altars at the further end, underneath the representation of the tauroctony, and also commonly contained considerable numbers of subsidiary altars, both in the main mithraeum chamber and in the ante-chamber or narthex.[4](p 49) These altars, which are of the standard Roman pattern, each carry a named dedicatory inscription from a particular initiate, who dedicated the altar to Mithras "in fulfillment of his vow", in gratitude for favours received.

Burned residues of animal entrails are commonly found on the main altars, indicating regular sacrificial use, though mithraea do not commonly appear to have been provided with facilities for ritual slaughter of sacrificial animals (a highly specialised function in Roman religion), and it may be presumed that a mithraeum would have made arrangements for this service to be provided for them in co-operation with the professional victimarius[51](p 568) of the civic cult. Prayers were addressed to the Sun three times a day, and Sunday was especially sacred.[52]

It is doubtful whether Mithraism had a monolithic and internally consistent doctrine.[y] It may have varied from location to location.[30](p 16) The iconography is relatively coherent.[26] It had no predominant sanctuary or cultic centre; and, although each mithraeum had its own officers and functionaries, there was no central supervisory authority. In some mithraea, such as that at Dura Europos, wall paintings depict prophets carrying scrolls,[54] but no named Mithraic sages are known, nor does any reference give the title of any Mithraic scripture or teaching. It is known that initiates could transfer with their grades from one Mithraeum to another.[4](p 139)

Mithraeum

See also: Mithraeum

A mithraeum found in the ruins of Ostia Antica, Italy

Temples of Mithras are sunk below ground, windowless, and very distinctive. In cities, the basement of an apartment block might be converted; elsewhere they might be excavated and vaulted over, or converted from a natural cave. Mithraic temples are common in the empire; although unevenly distributed, with considerable numbers found in Rome, Ostia, Numidia, Dalmatia, Britain and along the Rhine/Danube frontier, while being somewhat less common in Greece, Egypt, and Syria.[4](pp 26–27) According to Walter Burkert, the secret character of Mithraic rituals meant that Mithraism could only be practiced within a Mithraeum.[55] Some new finds at Tienen show evidence of large-scale feasting and suggest that the mystery religion may not have been as secretive as was generally believed.[z]

For the most part, mithraea tend to be small, externally undistinguished, and cheaply constructed; the cult generally preferring to create a new centre rather than expand an existing one. The mithraeum represented the cave to which Mithras carried and then killed the bull; and where stone vaulting could not be afforded, the effect would be imitated with lath and plaster. They are commonly located close to springs or streams; fresh water appears to have been required for some Mithraic rituals, and a basin is often incorporated into the structure.[4](p 73) There is usually a narthex or ante-chamber at the entrance, and often other ancillary rooms for storage and the preparation of food. The extant mithraea present us with actual physical remains of the architectural structures of the sacred spaces of the Mithraic cult. Mithraeum is a modern coinage and mithraists referred to their sacred structures as speum or antrum (cave), crypta (underground hallway or corridor), fanum (sacred or holy place), or even templum (a temple or a sacred space).[aa]

In their basic form, mithraea were entirely different from the temples and shrines of other cults. In the standard pattern of Roman religious precincts, the temple building functioned as a house for the god, who was intended to be able to view, through the opened doors and columnar portico, sacrificial worship being offered on an altar set in an open courtyard – potentially accessible not only to initiates of the cult, but also to colitores or non-initiated worshippers.[51](p 493) Mithraea were the antithesis of this.[51] (p 355)

Degrees of initiation

In the Suda under the entry Mithras, it states that "No one was permitted to be initiated into them (the mysteries of Mithras), until he should show himself holy and steadfast by undergoing several graduated tests." [56] Gregory Nazianzen refers to the "tests in the mysteries of Mithras". [57]

There were seven grades of initiation into Mithraism, which are listed by St. Jerome. [58] Manfred Clauss states that the number of grades, seven, must be connected to the planets. A mosaic in the Mithraeum of Felicissimus, Ostia Antica depicts these grades, with symbolic emblems that are connected either to the grades or are symbols of the planets. The grades also have an inscription beside them commending each grade into the protection of the different planetary gods. [4]: 132–133 In ascending order of importance, the initiatory grades were: [4] (p 133–138)

Grade	Name	Symbols	Planet or tutelary deity
			Ostia Antica Felicissimus' mithraeum symbol mosaic
1st	Corax, Corux, or Corvex (raven or crow)	Raven, beaker, caduceus	Mercury
2nd	Nymphus, Nymphobus (bridegroom)	Lamp, hand bell, veil, circlet or diadem	Venus
3rd	Miles (soldier)	Pouch, helmet, lance, drum, belt, breastplate	Mars
4th	Leo (lion)	Batillum, sistrum, laurel wreath, thunderbolt	Jupiter
5th	Perses (Persian)	Hooked sword, Phrygian cap, sickle, lunar crescent, stars, sling, pouch	Luna

6th

Heliodromus

(sun-runner) Torch, images of Helios,
radiate crown, whip, robes Sol

7th

Pater

(father) Patera, mitre, shepherd's staff,
garnet or ruby ring,
chasuble or cape,
elaborate jewel-encrusted robes
with metallic threads Saturn

Elsewhere, as at Dura-Europos, Mithraic graffiti survive giving membership lists, in which initiates of a mithraeum are named with their Mithraic grades. At Virunum, the membership list or *album sacratorum* was maintained as an inscribed plaque, updated year by year as new members were initiated. By cross-referencing these lists it is possible to track some initiates from one mithraeum to another; and also speculatively to identify Mithraic initiates with persons on other contemporary lists such as military service rolls and lists of devotees of non-Mithraic religious sanctuaries. Names of initiates are also found in the dedication inscriptions of altars and other cult objects.

Clauss noted in 1990 that overall, only about 14% of Mithraic names inscribed before 250 CE identify the initiate's grade – and hence questioned the traditional view that all initiates belonged to one of the seven grades.[59] Clauss argues that the grades represented a distinct class of priests, sacerdotēs. Gordon maintains the former theory of Merkelbach and others, especially noting such examples as Dura where all names are associated with a Mithraic grade. Some scholars maintain that practice may have differed over time, or from one Mithraeum to another.

The highest grade, pater, is by far the most common one found on dedications and inscriptions – and it would appear not to have been unusual for a mithraeum to have several men with this grade. The form *pater patrum* (father of fathers) is often found, which appears to indicate the pater with primary status. There are several examples of persons, commonly those of higher social status, joining a mithraeum with the status pater – especially in Rome during the 'pagan revival' of the 4th century. It has been suggested that some mithraea may have awarded honorary pater status to sympathetic dignitaries.[60]

The initiate into each grade appears to have been required to undertake a specific ordeal or test,[4](p 103) involving exposure to heat, cold or threatened peril. An 'ordeal pit', dating to the early 3rd century, has been identified in the mithraeum at Carrawburgh. Accounts of the cruelty of the emperor Commodus describes his amusing himself by enacting Mithraic initiation ordeals in homicidal form. By the later 3rd century, the

enacted trials appear to have been abated in rigor, as 'ordeals' were floored over.

Admission into the community was completed with a handshake with the pater, just as Mithras and Sol shook hands. The initiates were thus referred to as *syndexioi* (those united by the handshake). The term is used in an inscription by Proficentius[b] and derided by Firmicus Maternus in *De errore profanarum religionum*,[61] a 4th century Christian work attacking paganism.[62] In ancient Iran, taking the right hand was the traditional way of concluding a treaty or signifying some solemn understanding between two parties.[63]

Ritual re-enactments

Reconstruction of a mithraeum with a mosaic depicting the grades of initiation
Activities of the most prominent deities in Mithraic scenes, Sol and Mithras, were imitated in rituals by the two most senior officers in the cult's hierarchy, the Pater and the Heliodromus.[30](p 288–289) The initiates held a sacramental banquet, replicating the feast of Mithras and Sol.[30](p 288–289)

Reliefs on a cup found in Mainz[64][65] appear to depict a Mithraic initiation. On the cup, the initiate is depicted as being led into a location where a Pater would be seated in the guise of Mithras with a drawn bow. Accompanying the initiate is a mystagogue, who explains the symbolism and theology to the initiate. The Rite is thought to re-enact what has come to be called the 'Water Miracle', in which Mithras fires a bolt into a rock, and from the rock now spouts water.

Roger Beck has hypothesized a third processional Mithraic ritual, based on the Mainz cup and Porphyrys. This scene, called 'Procession of the Sun-Runner', shows the Heliodromus escorted by two figures representing *Cautes* and *Cautopates* (see below) and preceded by an initiate of the grade *Miles* leading a ritual enactment of the solar journey around the mithraeum, which was intended to represent the cosmos.[66]

Consequently, it has been argued that most Mithraic rituals involved a re-enactment by the initiates of episodes in the Mithras narrative,[4](pp 62–101) a narrative whose main elements were: birth from the rock, striking water from stone with an arrow shot, the killing of the bull, Sol's submission to Mithras, Mithras and Sol feasting on the bull, the ascent of Mithras to heaven in a chariot. A noticeable feature of this narrative (and of its regular depiction in surviving sets of relief carvings) is the absence of female personages (the sole exception being Luna watching the tauroctony in the upper corner opposite Helios, and the presumable presence of Venus as patroness of the nymphus grade).[4](p 33)

Membership

Another dedication to Mithras by legionaries of Legio II Herculia has been excavated at Sitifis (modern Setif in Algeria), so the unit or a subunit must have been transferred at

least once.

Only male names appear in surviving inscribed membership lists. Historians including Cumont and Richard Gordon have concluded that the cult was for men only.[ab][ac]

The ancient scholar Porphyry refers to female initiates in Mithraic rites.[ad] The early 20th-century historian A.S. Geden wrote that this may be due to a misunderstanding.[2] According to Geden, while the participation of women in the ritual was not unknown in the Eastern cults, the predominant military influence in Mithraism makes it unlikely in this instance.[2] It has recently been suggested by David Jonathan that "Women were involved with Mithraic groups in at least some locations of the empire." [69](p 121)

Soldiers were strongly represented amongst Mithraists, and also merchants, customs officials and minor bureaucrats. Few, if any, initiates came from leading aristocratic or senatorial families until the 'pagan revival' of the mid-4th century; but there were always considerable numbers of freedmen and slaves.[4](p 39)

Ethics

Clauss suggests that a statement by Porphyry, that people initiated into the Lion grade must keep their hands pure from everything that brings pain and harm and is impure, means that moral demands were made upon members of congregations.[ae]

A passage in the *Caesares* of Julian the Apostate refers to "commandments of Mithras". [af] Tertullian, in his treatise "On the Military Crown" records that Mithraists in the army were officially excused from wearing celebratory coronets on the basis of the Mithraic initiation ritual that included refusing a proffered crown, because "their only crown was Mithras".[70]

History and development

Mithras before the Roman Mysteries

Mithras-Helios (right), with solar rays and in Iranian dress,[71] with Antiochus I of Commagene (Mt. Nemrut, 1st century BCE)

4th-century relief of the investiture of Sasanian king Ardashir II. Mithra stands on a lotus flower on the left holding a barsom.[71]

According to the archaeologist Maarten Vermaseren, evidence from Commagene from the 1st century BCE demonstrates the "reverence paid to Mithras" but does not refer to "the mysteries".[ag] In the colossal statuary erected by King Antiochus I (69–34 BCE) at Mount Nemrut, Mithras is shown beardless, wearing a Phrygian cap[3][73] (or the similar headdress – a Persian tiara), in Iranian (Parthian) clothing,[71] and was originally seated on a throne alongside other deities and the king himself.[74] On the back of the thrones there is an inscription in Greek, which includes the compound name Apollo-Mithras-Helios in the genitive case (Ἀπόλλωνος Μιθρου Ἡλίου).[75] Vermaseren also reports about a Mithras cult in Fayum in the 3rd century BCE.[39](p 467) R.D. Barnett has argued that the royal seal of King Saussatar of the Mitanni from c. 1450 BCE depicts a

tauroctonous Mithras.[ah]

Beginnings of Roman Mithraism

The origins and spread of the Mysteries have been intensely debated among scholars and there are radically differing views on these issues.[76] According to Clauss, mysteries of Mithras were not practiced until the 1st century CE.[4] According to Ulansey, the earliest evidence for the Mithraic mysteries places their appearance in the middle of the 1st century BCE: The historian Plutarch says that in 67 BCE the pirates of Cilicia (a province on the southeastern coast of Asia Minor, that provided sea access to adjacent Commagene) were practicing "secret rites" of Mithras.[ai] According to C.M. Daniels,[78] whether any of this relates to the origins of the mysteries is unclear.[aj] The unique underground temples or mithraea appear suddenly in the archaeology in the last quarter of the 1st century CE.[79](p 118)

Earliest archaeology

Inscriptions and monuments related to the Mithraic Mysteries are catalogued in a two volume work by Maarten J. Vermaseren, the *Corpus Inscriptionum et Monumentorum Religionis Mithriacae* (or CIMRM).[35] The earliest monument showing Mithras slaying the bull is thought to be CIMRM 593, found in Rome. There is no date, but the inscription tells us that it was dedicated by a certain Alcimus, steward of T. Claudius Livianus. Vermaseren and Gordon believe that this Livianus is a certain Livianus who was commander of the Praetorian guard in 101 CE, which would give an earliest date of 98–99 CE.[80]

Votive altar from Alba Iulia in present-day Romania, dedicated to Invicto Mythrae in fulfillment of a vow (votum)

Five small terracotta plaques of a figure holding a knife over a bull have been excavated near Kerch in the Crimea, dated by Beskow and Clauss to the second half of the 1st century BCE,[ak] and by Beck to 50 BCE – 50 CE. These may be the earliest tauroctonies, if they are accepted to be a depiction of Mithras.[al]

The bull-slaying figure wears a Phrygian cap, but is described by Beck and Beskow as otherwise unlike standard depictions of the tauroctony. Another reason for not connecting these artifacts with the Mithraic Mysteries is that the first of these plaques was found in a woman's tomb.[am]

An altar or block from near SS. Pietro e Marcellino on the Esquiline in Rome was inscribed with a bilingual inscription by an Imperial freedman named T. Flavius Hyginus, probably between 80 and 100 CE. It is dedicated to Sol Invictus Mithras.[an]

CIMRM[35] 2268 is a broken base or altar from Novae/Steklen in Moesia Inferior, dated 100 CE, showing Cautus and Cautopates.

Other early archaeology includes the Greek inscription from Venosia by Sagaris actor

probably from 100–150 CE; the Sidon cippus dedicated by Theodotus priest of Mithras to Asclepius, 140–141 CE; and the earliest military inscription, by C. Sacidius Barbarus, centurion of XV Apollinaris, from the bank of the Danube at Carnuntum, probably before 114 CE.[14](p 150)

According to C.M. Daniels,[78] the Carnuntum inscription is the earliest Mithraic dedication from the Danube region, which along with Italy is one of the two regions where Mithraism first struck root.[ao] The earliest dateable mithraeum outside Rome dates from 148 CE.[ap] The Mithraeum at Caesarea Maritima is the only one in Palestine and the date is inferred.[aq]

Earliest cult locations

According to Roger Beck, the attested locations of the Roman cult in the earliest phase (c. 80–120 CE) are as follows:[30](pp 34–35)

Mithraea datable from pottery

Nida/Hedderheim III (Germania Sup.)

Mogontiacum (Germania Sup.)

Pons Aeni (Noricum)

Caesarea Maritima (Judeaea)

Datable dedications

Nida/Hedderheim I (Germania Sup.) (CIMRM[35] 1091, 1092, & 1098)

Carnuntum III (Pannonia Sup.) (CIMRM[35] 1718)

Novae (Moesia Inf.) (CIMRM[35] 2268 & 2269)

Oescus (Moesia Inf.) (CIMRM 2250)

Rome (CIMRM[35] 362, 593, & 594)

Classical literature about Mithras and the Mysteries

Mithras and the Bull: This fresco from the mithraeum at Marino, Italy (third century) shows the tauroctony and the celestial lining of Mithras' cape.

According to Boyce, the earliest literary references to the mysteries are by the Latin poet Statius, about 80 CE, and Plutarch (c. 100 CE).[22][ar]

Statius

The Thebaid (c. 80 CE[9](p 29)) an epic poem by Statius, pictures Mithras in a cave, wrestling with something that has horns.[85] The context is a prayer to the god Phoebus. [86] The cave is described as persei, which in this context is usually translated Persian. According to the translator J.H. Mozley it literally means Persean, referring to Perses, the son of Perseus and Andromeda,[9](p 29) this Perses being the ancestor of the Persians according to Greek legend.[9](pp 27–29)

Justin Martyr

Writing in approximately 145 CE, the early Christian apologist Justin Martyr charges the

cult of Mithras with imitating the Christian communion,

Which the wicked devils have imitated in the mysteries of Mithras, commanding the same things to be done. For, that bread and a cup of water are placed, with certain incantations, in the mystic rites of one who is being initiated, you either know or can learn.[87]

Plutarch

The Greek biographer Plutarch (46–127 CE) says that "secret mysteries ... of Mithras" were practiced by the pirates of Cilicia, the coastal province in the southeast of Anatolia, who were active in the 1st century BCE: "They likewise offered strange sacrifices; those of Olympus I mean; and they celebrated certain secret mysteries, among which those of Mithras continue to this day, being originally instituted by them." [88] He mentions that the pirates were especially active during the Mithridatic wars (between the Roman Republic and King Mithridates VI of Pontus) in which they supported the king. [88] The association between Mithridates and the pirates is also mentioned by the ancient historian Appian. [89] The 4th century commentary on Vergil by Servius says that Pompey settled some of these pirates in Calabria in southern Italy. [90]

Dio Cassius

The historian Dio Cassius (2nd to 3rd century CE) tells how the name of Mithras was spoken during the state visit to Rome of Tiridates I of Armenia, during the reign of Nero. (Tiridates was the son of Vonones II of Parthia, and his coronation by Nero in 66 CE confirmed the end of a war between Parthia and Rome.) Dio Cassius writes that Tiridates, as he was about to receive his crown, told the Roman emperor that he revered him "as Mithras". [91] Roger Beck thinks it possible that this episode contributed to the emergence of Mithraism as a popular religion in Rome. [as]

Porphyry

Mosaic (1st century CE) depicting Mithras emerging from his cave and flanked by Cautes and Cautopates (Walters Art Museum)

The philosopher Porphyry (3rd–4th century CE) gives an account of the origins of the Mysteries in his work *De antro nympharum* (The Cave of the Nymphs). [93] Citing Eubulus as his source, Porphyry writes that the original temple of Mithras was a natural cave, containing fountains, which Zoroaster found in the mountains of Persia. To Zoroaster, this cave was an image of the whole world, so he consecrated it to Mithras, the creator of the world. Later in the same work, Porphyry links Mithras and the bull with planets and star-signs: Mithras himself is associated with the sign of Aries and the planet Mars, while the bull is associated with Venus. [at]

Porphyry is writing close to the demise of the cult, and Robert Turcan has challenged the idea that Porphyry's statements about Mithraism are accurate. His case is that far from representing what Mithraists believed, they are merely representations by the Neoplatonists of what it suited them in the late 4th century to read into the mysteries. [94] Merkelbach & Beck believed Porphyry's work "is in fact thoroughly coloured with the

doctrines of the Mysteries".[43](p 308 note 37) Beck holds that classical scholars have neglected Porphyry's evidence and have taken an unnecessarily skeptical view of Porphyry.[95] According to Beck, Porphyry's *De antro* is the only clear text from antiquity which tells us about the intent of the Mithraic mysteries and how that intent was realized. [au] David Ulansey finds it important that Porphyry "confirms ... that astral conceptions played an important role in Mithraism." [9](p 18)

Mithras Liturgy

In later antiquity, the Greek name of Mithras (Μιθράς) occurs in the text known as the "Mithras Liturgy", a part of the Paris Greek Magical Papyrus[97] here Mithras is given the epithet "the great god", and is identified with the sun god Helios.[99][100] There have been different views among scholars as to whether this text is an expression of Mithraism as such. Franz Cumont argued that it is not;[101](p 12) Marvin Meyer thinks it is;[98](pp 180–182) while Hans Dieter Betz sees it as a synthesis of Greek, Egyptian, and Mithraic traditions.[101][102]

Modern debate on origin

Cumont's hypothesis: from Persian state religion

Augustan-era intaglio depicting a tauroctony (Walters Art Museum)

4th-century relief of the investiture of the Sasanian king Ardashir II. Mithra stands on a lotus flower on the left holding a barsom.[103]

Scholarship on Mithras begins with Franz Cumont, who published a two volume collection of source texts and images of monuments in French in 1894–1900, *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* [French: Texts and Illustrated Monuments Relating to the Mysteries of Mithra].[104] An English translation of part of this work was published in 1903, with the title *The Mysteries of Mithra*. [105] Cumont's hypothesis, as the author summarizes it in the first 32 pages of his book, was that the Roman religion was "the Roman form of Mazdaism", [43](p 298) the Persian state religion, disseminated from the East. He identified the ancient Aryan deity who appears in Persian literature as Mithras with the Hindu god Mitra of the Vedic hymns.[106] According to Cumont, the god Mithra came to Rome "accompanied by a large representation of the Mazdean Pantheon." [107] Cumont considers that while the tradition "underwent some modification in the Occident ... the alterations that it suffered were largely superficial." [108]

Criticisms and reassessments of Cumont

Cumont's theories came in for severe criticism from John R. Hinnells and R.L. Gordon at the First International Congress of Mithraic Studies held in 1971. [av] John Hinnells was unwilling to reject entirely the idea of Iranian origin, [109] but wrote: "we must now conclude that his reconstruction simply will not stand. It receives no support from the Iranian material and is in fact in conflict with the ideas of that tradition as they are represented in the extant texts. Above all, it is a theoretical reconstruction which does not accord with the actual Roman iconography." [aw] He discussed Cumont's

reconstruction of the bull-slaying scene and stated "that the portrayal of Mithras given by Cumont is not merely unsupported by Iranian texts but is actually in serious conflict with known Iranian theology." [ax] Another paper by R.L. Gordon argued that Cumont severely distorted the available evidence by forcing the material to conform to his predetermined model of Zoroastrian origins. Gordon suggested that the theory of Persian origins was completely invalid and that the Mithraic mysteries in the West were an entirely new creation. [111]

A similar view has been expressed by Luther H. Martin: "Apart from the name of the god himself, in other words, Mithraism seems to have developed largely in and is, therefore, best understood from the context of Roman culture." [112] (p xiv)

According to Hopfe, "All theories of the origin of Mithraism acknowledge a connection, however vague, to the Mithra/Mitra figure of ancient Aryan religion." [17] Reporting on the Second International Congress of Mithraic Studies, 1975, Ugo Bianchi says that although he welcomes "the tendency to question in historical terms the relations between Eastern and Western Mithraism", it "should not mean obliterating what was clear to the Romans themselves, that Mithras was a 'Persian' (in wider perspective: an Indo-Iranian) god." [113]

Boyce wrote, "no satisfactory evidence has yet been adduced to show that, before Zoroaster, the concept of a supreme god existed among the Iranians, or that among them Mithra – or any other divinity – ever enjoyed a separate cult of his or her own outside either their ancient or their Zoroastrian pantheons." [114] She also said that although recent studies have minimized the Iranizing aspects of the self-consciously Persian religion "at least in the form which it attained under the Roman Empire", the name Mithras is enough to show "that this aspect is of some importance." She also says that "the Persian affiliation of the Mysteries is acknowledged in the earliest literary references to them." [22]

Beck tells us that since the 1970s scholars have generally rejected Cumont, but adds that recent theories about how Zoroastrianism was during the period BCE now make some new form of Cumont's east–west transfer possible. [ay] He says that

... an indubitable residuum of things Persian in the Mysteries and a better knowledge of what constituted actual Mazdaism have allowed modern scholars to postulate for Roman Mithraism a continuing Iranian theology. This indeed is the main line of Mithraic scholarship, the Cumontian model which subsequent scholars accept, modify, or reject. For the transmission of Iranian doctrine from East to West, Cumont postulated a plausible, if hypothetical, intermediary: the Magusaeans of the Iranian diaspora in Anatolia. More problematic – and never properly addressed by Cumont or his successors – is how real-life Roman Mithraists subsequently maintained a quite complex and sophisticated Iranian theology behind an occidental facade. Other than the images at Dura of the two 'magi' with scrolls, there is no direct and explicit evidence for the carriers of such doctrines. ... Up to a point, Cumont's Iranian paradigm, especially in

Turcan's modified form, is certainly plausible.[115][116][117]

He also says that "the old Cumontian model of formation in, and diffusion from, Anatolia ... is by no means dead – nor should it be." [118]

Modern theories

Bas-relief depicting the tauroctony. Mithras is depicted looking to Sol Invictus as he slays the bull. Sol and Luna appear at the top of the relief.

Beck theorizes that the cult was created in Rome, by a single founder who had some knowledge of both Greek and Oriental religion, but suggests that some of the ideas used may have passed through the Hellenistic kingdoms. He observes that "Mithras – moreover, a Mithras who was identified with the Greek Sun god Helios" was among the gods of the syncretic Greco-Armenian-Iranian royal cult at Nemrut, founded by Antiochus I of Commagene in the mid 1st century BCE.[119] While proposing the theory, Beck says that his scenario may be regarded as Cumontian in two ways. Firstly, because it looks again at Anatolia and Anatolians, and more importantly, because it hews back to the methodology first used by Cumont.[120]

Merkelbach suggests that its mysteries were essentially created by a particular person or persons[121] and created in a specific place, the city of Rome, by someone from an eastern province or border state who knew the Iranian myths in detail, which he wove into his new grades of initiation; but that he must have been Greek and Greek-speaking because he incorporated elements of Greek Platonism into it. The myths, he suggests, were probably created in the milieu of the imperial bureaucracy, and for its members. [122] Clauss tends to agree. Beck calls this "the most likely scenario" and states "Until now, Mithraism has generally been treated as if it somehow evolved Topsy-like from its Iranian precursor – a most implausible scenario once it is stated explicitly." [43] (pp 304, 306)

Mithraic ritual in the Mithraeum of Sutri, officiated by Giuseppe Barbera, Pontefix Maximus of the Roman religious organisation Pietas Comunità Gentile
Archaeologist Lewis M. Hopfe notes that there are only three mithraea in Roman Syria, in contrast to further west. He writes: "Archaeology indicates that Roman Mithraism had its epicenter in Rome ... the fully developed religion known as Mithraism seems to have begun in Rome and been carried to Syria by soldiers and merchants." [az]

Taking a different view from other modern scholars, Ulansey argues that the Mithraic mysteries began in the Greco-Roman world as a religious response to the discovery by the Greek astronomer Hipparchus of the astronomical phenomenon of the precession of the equinoxes – a discovery that amounted to discovering that the entire cosmos was moving in a hitherto unknown way. This new cosmic motion, he suggests, was seen by the founders of Mithraism as indicating the existence of a powerful new god capable of shifting the cosmic spheres and thereby controlling the universe.[9] (pp 77 ff)

A. D. H. Bivar, L. A. Campbell, and G. Widengren have variously argued that Roman Mithraism represents a continuation of some form of Iranian Mithra worship.[123] More recently, Parvaneh Pourshariati has made similar claims.[124]

According to Antonia Tripolitis, Roman Mithraism originated in Vedic India and picked up many features of the cultures which it encountered in its westward journey.[ba]

Sol Invictus from the Archaeological Museum of Milan (Museo archeologico)

Later history

The first important expansion of the mysteries in the Empire seems to have happened quite quickly, late in the reign of Antoninus Pius (b. 121 CE, d. 161 CE) and under Marcus Aurelius. By this time all the key elements of the mysteries were in place.[bb]

Mithraism reached the apogee of its popularity during the 2nd and 3rd centuries, spreading at an "astonishing" rate at the same period when the worship of Sol Invictus was incorporated into the state-sponsored cults.[43](p 299)[bc] At this period a certain Pallas devoted a monograph to Mithras, and a little later Euboulus wrote a History of Mithras, although both works are now lost.[127] According to the 4th century Historia Augusta, the emperor Commodus participated in its mysteries[128] but it never became one of the state cults.[bd]

The historian Jacob Burckhardt writes:

Mithras is the guide of souls which he leads from the earthly life into which they had fallen back up to the light from which they issued ... It was not only from the religions and the wisdom of Orientals and Egyptians, even less from Christianity, that the notion that life on earth was merely a transition to a higher life was derived by the Romans. Their own anguish and the awareness of senescence made it plain enough that earthly existence was all hardship and bitterness. Mithras-worship became one, and perhaps the most significant, of the religions of redemption in declining paganism.[129]

Persecution and Christianization

The religion and its followers faced persecution in the 4th century from Christianization, and Mithraism came to an end at some point between its last decade and the 5th century. Ulansey states that "Mithraism declined with the rise to power of Christianity, until the beginning of the fifth century, when Christianity became strong enough to exterminate by force rival religions such as Mithraism." [be] According to Speidel, Christians fought fiercely with this feared enemy and suppressed it during the late 4th century. Mithraic sanctuaries were destroyed and religion was no longer a matter of personal choice.[bf][bg] According to L.H. Martin, Roman Mithraism came to an end with the anti-pagan decrees of the Christian emperor Theodosius during the last decade of the 4th century.[bh]

Clauss states that inscriptions show Mithras as one of the cults listed on inscriptions by Roman senators who had not converted to Christianity, as part of the "pagan revival" among the elite in the second half of the 4th century.[bi] Beck states that "Quite early in the [fourth] century the religion was as good as dead throughout the empire." [43](p 299) Archaeological evidence indicates the continuance of the cult of Mithras up until the end of the 4th century. In particular, large numbers of votive coins deposited by worshippers have been recovered at the Mithraeum at Pons Sarravi (Sarrebouurg) in Gallia Belgica, in a series that runs from Gallienus (r. 253–268) to Theodosius I (r. 379–395). These were scattered over the floor when the mithraeum was destroyed, as Christians apparently regarded the coins as polluted; therefore, providing reliable dates for the functioning of the mithraeum up until near the end of the century.[4](pp 31–32)

Franz Cumont states that Mithraism may have survived in certain remote cantons of the Alps and Vosges into the 5th century.[133] According to Mark Humphries, the deliberate concealment of Mithraic cult objects in some areas suggests that precautions were being taken against Christian attacks. In areas like the Rhine frontier, barbarian invasions may have also played a role in the end of Mithraism.[134]

At some of the mithraeums that have been found below churches, such as the Santa Prisca Mithraeum and the San Clemente Mithraeum, the ground plan of the church above was made in a way to symbolize Christianity's domination of Mithraism.[135] The cult disappeared earlier than that of Isis. Isis was still remembered in the Middle Ages as a pagan deity, but Mithras was already forgotten in late antiquity.[4](p 171)

Interpretations of the bull-slaying scene

Unusual tauroctony at the Brukenthal National Museum

According to Cumont, the imagery of the tauroctony was a Graeco-Roman representation of an event in Zoroastrian cosmogony described in a 9th-century Zoroastrian text, the Bundahishn. In this text the evil spirit Ahriman (not Mithra) slays the primordial creature Gavaevodata, which is represented as a bovine.[bj] Cumont held that a version of the myth must have existed in which Mithras, not Ahriman, killed the bovine. But according to Hinnells, no such variant of the myth is known, and that this is merely speculation: "In no known Iranian text [either Zoroastrian or otherwise] does Mithra slay a bull." [137](p 291)

David Ulansey finds astronomical evidence from the mithraeum itself.[138] He reminds us that the Platonic writer Porphyry wrote in the 3rd century CE that the cave-like temple Mithraea depicted "an image of the world"[bk] and that Zoroaster consecrated a cave resembling the world fabricated by Mithras.[bl] The ceiling of the Caesarea Maritima Mithraeum retains traces of blue paint, which may mean the ceiling was painted to depict the sky and the stars.[140]

Beck has given the following celestial composition of the Tauroctony:[141]

Component of Tauroctony Celestial counterpart

Bull Taurus

Sol Sun

Luna Moon

Dog Canis Minor, Canis Major

Snake Hydra, Serpens, Draco

Raven Corvus

Scorpion Scorpius

Wheat's ear (on bull's tail) Spica

Twins Cautus and Cautopates Gemini

Lion Leo

Crater Crater

Cave Universe

Several celestial identities for the Tauroctonous Mithras (TM) himself have been proposed. Beck summarizes them in the table below.[142]

Scholar Identifies tauroctonous Mithras (TM) as[142]

Bausani, A. (1979) TM associated with Leo, in that the tauroctony is a type of the ancient lion–bull (Leo–Taurus) combat motif.

Beck, R.L. (1994) TM = Sun in Leo

Insler, S. (1978) [tauroctony = heliacal setting of Taurus]

Jacobs, B. (1999) [tauroctony = heliacal setting of Taurus]

North, J.D. (1990) TM = Betelgeuse (Alpha Orionis) setting,

TM knife = Triangulum setting,

TM cloak = Capella (Alpha Aurigae) setting.

Rutgers, A.J. (1970) TM = Sun,

Bull = Moon

Sandelin, K.-G. (1988) TM = Auriga

Speidel, M.P. (1980) TM = Orion

Ulansey, D. (1989) TM = Perseus

Weiss, M. (1994, 1998) TM = the Night Sky

Sol and Mithras banqueting with Luna and the twin divinities Cautus and Cautopates, his attendants (side B of a double-sided Roman marble relief, 2nd or 3rd century CE) Ulansey has proposed that Mithras seems to have been derived from the constellation of Perseus, which is positioned just above Taurus in the night sky. He sees iconographic and mythological parallels between the two figures: both are young heroes, carry a dagger, and wear a Phrygian cap. He also mentions the similarity of the image of Perseus killing the Gorgon and the tauroctony, both figures being associated with caverns and both having connections to Persia as further evidence.[9](pp 25–39) Michael Speidel associates Mithras with the constellation of Orion because of the proximity to Taurus, and the consistent nature of the depiction of the figure as having wide shoulders, a garment flared at the hem, and narrowed at the waist with a belt, thus taking on the form of the constellation.[132]

In opposition to the theories above, which link Mithras to specific constellations, Jelbert suggests that the deity represented the Milky Way.[143] Jelbert argues that within the tauroctony image, Mithras' body is analogous to the path of the Milky Way that bridges Taurus and Scorpius, and that this bifurcated section mirrors the shape, scale and position of the deity relative to the other characters in the scene. The notion of Mithras as the Milky Way would have resonated with his status as god of light and lord of genesis, suggests Jelbert, due to the luminosity of this celestial feature, as well as the location of the traditional soul gates at Taurus-Gemini and Scorpius- Sagittarius, portals once believed to represent the points of entry for the soul at birth and death respectively.

Beck has criticized Speidel and Ulansey of adherence to a literal cartographic logic, describing their theories as a "will-o'-the-wisp" that "lured them down a false trail".[30] He argues that a literal reading of the tauroctony as a star chart raises two major problems: it is difficult to find a constellation counterpart for Mithras himself (despite efforts by Speidel and Ulansey) and that, unlike in a star chart, each feature of the tauroctony might have more than a single counterpart. Rather than seeing Mithras as a constellation, Beck argues that Mithras is the prime traveller on the celestial stage (represented by the other symbols of the scene), the Unconquered Sun moving through the constellations.[30] But again, Meyer holds that the Mithras Liturgy reflects the world of Mithraism and may be a confirmation for Ulansey's theory of Mithras being held responsible for the precession of equinoxes.[bm]

Peter Chrisp posits that the killing was of a "sacred bull" and that the "act [was] believed" to create the universe's life force and maintain it.[145]

Comparable belief systems

Main article: Mithraism in comparison with other belief systems

Mithraic altar depicting Cautes riding a bull (Sibiu/Hermannstadt, Romania)

The cult of Mithras was part of the syncretic nature of ancient Roman religion. Almost all Mithraea contain statues dedicated to gods of other cults, and it is common to find inscriptions dedicated to Mithras in other sanctuaries, especially those of Jupiter Dolichenus.[4](p 158) Mithraism was not an alternative to Rome's other traditional religions, but was one of many forms of religious practice, and many Mithraic initiates can also be found participating in the civic religion, and as initiates of other mystery cults.[146]

Christianity

See also: Mithraism in comparison with other belief systems § Mithraism and Christianity

Early Christian apologists noted similarities between Mithraic and Christian rituals, but nonetheless took an extremely negative view of Mithraism: they interpreted Mithraic rituals as evil copies of Christian ones.[147][148] For instance, Tertullian wrote that as a prelude to the Mithraic initiation ceremony, the initiate was given a ritual bath and at the end of the ceremony, received a mark on the forehead. This mark on the forehead may

have likely been the Latin letter, "M", which stood for the name of their messianic god-king Mithras. Tertullian also described these rites as a diabolical counterfeit of the baptism and chrismation of Christians.[149] Justin Martyr contrasted Mithraic initiation communion with the Eucharist:[150]

Wherefore also the evil demons in mimicry have handed down that the same thing should be done in the Mysteries of Mithras. For that bread and a cup of water are in these mysteries set before the initiate with certain speeches you either know or can learn.[151]

Ernest Renan suggested in 1882 that, under different circumstances, Mithraism might have risen to the prominence of modern-day Christianity. Renan wrote: "If the growth of Christianity had been arrested by some mortal malady, the world would have been Mithraic".[152][bn] This theory has since been contested. Leonard Boyle wrote in 1987 that "too much ... has been made of the 'threat' of Mithraism to Christianity",[154] pointing out that there are only fifty known mithraea in the entire city of Rome. J.A. Ezquerro holds that since the two religions did not share similar aims, there was never any real threat of Mithraism taking over the Roman world.[bo] Mithraism had backing from the Roman aristocracy during a time when their conservative values were seen as under attack during the rising tides of Christianity.[156]

According to Mary Boyce, Mithraism was a potent enemy for Christianity in the West, though she is sceptical about its hold in the East.[bp][158][159] F. Coarelli (1979) has tabulated forty actual or possible Mithraea and estimated that Rome would have had "not less than 680–690" mithraea.[8][bq] L.M. Hopfe states that more than 400 Mithraic sites have been found. These sites are spread all over the Roman empire from places as far as Dura-Europos in the east, and England in the west. He, too, says that Mithraism may have been a rival of Christianity.[br] David Ulansey thinks Renan's statement "somewhat exaggerated",[bs] but does consider Mithraism "one of Christianity's major competitors in the Roman Empire".[bs]

See also

London Mithraeum

Maitreya

Mithra

Mehregan

Roman–Iranian relations

Santo Stefano al Monte Celio#Mithraeum

Tienen Mithraeum

Mithraic Reliefs of Jort

Helmet of Coțofenești – dated to about 450 BCE, before the beginning of Roman

Mithraism

Footnotes

"The term "Mithraism" is of course a modern coinage: In antiquity the cult was known as "the mysteries of Mithras"; alternatively, as "the mysteries of the Persians". ... The Mithraists, who were manifestly not Persians in any ethnic sense, thought of themselves

as cultic "Persians". ... the ancient Roman Mithraists themselves were convinced that their cult was founded by none other than Zoroaster, who "dedicated to Mithras, the creator and father of all, a cave in the mountains bordering Persia", an idyllic setting "abounding in flowers and springs of water". (Porphyry, *On the Cave of the Nymphs*, 6) [1]

"That the hand-shaken might make their vows joyfully forever". — Clauss (2000).[4] (p42)

"We know a good deal about them because archaeology has disinterred many meeting places together with numerous artifacts and representations of the cult myth, mostly in the form of relief sculpture" — Beck (2011).[7]

... in the absence of any ancient explanations of its meaning, Mithraic iconography has proven to be exceptionally difficult to decipher. — Ulansey (1991)[9](p 3)

"After this, Celsus, desiring to exhibit his learning in his treatise against us, quotes also certain Persian mysteries, where he says: 'These things are obscurely hinted at in the accounts of the Persians, and especially in the mysteries of Mithras, which are celebrated among them ...' "

Chapter 24: "After the instance borrowed from the Mithraic mysteries, Celsus declares that he who would investigate the Christian mysteries, along with the aforesaid Persian, will, on comparing the two together, and on unveiling the rites of the Christians, see in this way the difference between them".[10]

"For most of the twentieth century, the major problem addressed by scholarship on both Roman Mithraism and the Iranian god Mithra was the question of continuity."[1]

It is therefore highly likely that it was in the context of Mithridates' alliance with the Cilician pirates that there arose the syncretistic link between Perseus and Mithra which led to the name Mithras (a Greek form of the name Mithra) being given to the god of the new cult. — D. Ulansey (1991)[9](p 90)

... Mithra is the next most important deity and may even have occupied a position of near equality with Ahura Mazde. He was associated with the Sun, and in time the name Mithra became a common word for "Sun". Mithra functioned preeminently in the ethical sphere; he was the god of the covenant, who oversaw all solemn agreements that people made among themselves ... In later times Mithra gave his name to Mithraism, a mystery religion.[12]

Cumont's ... argument was straightforward and may be summarized succinctly: The name of the god of the cult, Mithras, is the Latin (and Greek) form of the name of an ancient Iranian god, Mithra; in addition, the Romans believed that their cult was connected with Persia (as the Romans called Iran); therefore we may assume that Roman Mithraism is nothing other than the Iranian cult of Mithra transplanted into the Roman Empire. — D. Ulansey (1991)[9](p 8)

Quoting from Gordon:[14](p 160) "The usual western nominative form of Mithras' name in the mysteries ended in -s, as we can see from the one authentic dedication in the nominative, recut over a dedication to Sarapis (463, Terme de Caracalla), and from occasional grammatical errors such as deo inviatio Metras (1443). But it is probable that Euboulus and Pallas, at least, used the name 'Mithra' as an indeclinable [foreign word] (ap. Porphyry, *De abstinentia* II.56 and IV.16)."[14]

India's sacred literature refers to him since the hymns of the Rig Veda. But it was in Iran

where Mithras rose to the greatest prominence: Rebounding after the reforms of Zarathustra, Mithras became one of the great gods of the Achaemenian emperors and to this very day he is worshipped in India and Iran by Parsees and Zarathustrians.[16]

The name Mithras comes from a root mei- (which implies the idea of exchange), accompanied by an instrumental suffix. It was therefore a means of exchange, the 'contract' which rules human relations and is the basis of social life. In Sanskrit, mitra means 'friend' or 'friendship', like mihr in Persian. In Zend, mithra means precisely the 'contract', which eventually became deified, following the same procedure as Venus, the 'charm' for the Romans. We find him invoked with Varuna in an agreement concluded circa

... the intimate alliance between the pirates and Mithridates Eupator, named after Mithra and mythically descended from Perseus, led to the pirates adopting the name Mithras for the new god. — D. Ulansey (1991)[9](p 94)

"The theory that the complex iconography of the characteristic monuments (of which the oldest belong to the second century A.C.) could be interpreted by direct reference to Iranian religion is now widely rejected; and recent studies have tended greatly to reduce what appears to be the actual Iranian content of this "self consciously 'Persian' religion", at least in the form which it attained under the Roman empire. Nevertheless, as the name Mithras alone shows, this content was of some importance; and the Persian affiliation of the Mysteries is acknowledged in the earliest literary reference to them.[22]

... we possess virtually no theological statements either by Mithraists themselves or by other writers. — Clauss (2000)[4](p xxi)

English tauroctony is an adaption of the Greek word tauroktónos (ταυροκτόνος, "bull killing").

"Although the iconography of the cult varied a great deal from temple to temple, there is one element of the cult's iconography which was present in essentially the same form in every mithraeum and which, moreover, was clearly of the utmost importance to the cult's ideology; namely the so-called tauroctony, or bull-slaying scene, in which the god Mithras, accompanied by a series of other figures, is depicted in the act of killing the bull." — D. Ulansey (1991)[9](p 6)

"The god's right leg, appearing on the left as one faces the tauroctony, is nearly always straight as it pins the bull's hoof to the ground, while his left leg, which is usually resting on the back or flank of the bull, is bent at the knee with his foot often partially obscured beneath the folds of his tunic. Anyone familiar with the cult's iconography will immediately recognize this awkward and possibly unnatural posture as a typical or even essential aspect of the tauroctony. The remarkable consistency of this particular feature is underscored by comparison with the subtle variability of others ..." — Z. Mazur (c. 2011)[23]

The figure of Mithras himself is usually attired in an oriental costume of Phrygian cap, tunica manicata (a long-sleeved tunic), anaxyrides (eastern style trousers), and a cape, though in some cases, he is depicted heroically nude or even, in a unique example from Ostia, in what seems to be a Greek chiton. Like the general trend in Graeco-Roman art, most if not all tauroctony scenes, regardless of the medium they were executed in, were painted, and the different items of Mithras' clothing was usually colored in either blue or red, often, as in the painting at Marino, with most of the costume in red with only the

inside of the cape being blue and star-speckled. The bull was often white, sometimes wearing the dorsuale, the Roman sacrificial band in reds or browns, while the torchbearers could be depicted in a variety of colors with reds and greens being the most common. — Bjørnebye (2007).[27]:chapter: The Mithraic icon in fourth century Rome: The composition of the Mithraic cult icon

Note, however, that no inscription naming Arimanius has been found engraved on a lion-headed figure. All of the dedications to the name Arimanius are inscribed on altars without figures.[citation needed]

According to some, the lion man is Aion (Zurvan, or Kronos); according to others, Ahriman.[39](p 467 ff)

One should bear in mind that the Mithraic New Year began on Natalis Invicti, the birthday of their invincible god, i.e., December 25th, when the new light ... appears from the vault of heaven. — Vermaseren & van Essen (1965)[41]

"For a time, coins and other monuments continued to link Christian doctrines with the worship of the Sun, to which Constantine had been addicted previously. But even when this phase came to an end, Roman paganism continued to exert other, permanent influences, great and small. ... The ecclesiastical calendar retains numerous remnants of pre-Christian festivals — notably Christmas, which blends elements including both the feast of the Saturnalia and the birthday of Mithra."[42]

The original editor of the text, Albrecht Dieterich, claimed that it recorded an authentic Mithraic ritual, but this claim was rejected by Cumont, who felt that the references to Mithras in the text were merely the result of an extravagant syncretism evident in magical traditions. Until recently, most scholars followed Cumont in refusing to see any authentic Mithraic doctrine in the Mithras Liturgy. — D. Ulansey (1991)[9](p 105)

"Nevertheless, the fact that Porphyry and / or his sources would have had no scruples about adapting or even inventing Mithraic data to suit their arguments does not necessarily mean that they actually did so. It is far more likely that Mithraic doctrine (in the weak sense of the term!) really was what the philosophers said it was ... there are no insuperable discrepancies between Mithraic practice and theory as attested in Porphyry and Mithraic practice and theory as archaeology has allowed us to recover them. Even if there were major discrepancies, they would matter only in the context of the old model of an internally consistent and monolithic Mithraic doctrine.[53](p 87)

The discovery of a large quantity of tableware as well as animal remains in a pit outside the newly excavated mithraeum at Tienen, Belgium, has also attracted new attention to the topic of Mithraic processions and large-scale feasts, begging a re-examination of the secrecy of the cult and its visibility in local society ... provides evidence for large-scale, semi-public feasts outside of the mithraeum itself, suggesting that each mithraeum might have had a far larger following than its relative size would imply. — Bjørnebye (2007).[27](pp 12,36)

The extant mithraea present us with actual physical remains of the architectural structures of the sacred spaces of the Mithraic cult. While the Mithraists themselves never used the word mithraeum as far as we know, but preferred words like speleum or antrum (cave), crypta (underground hallway or corridor), fanum (sacred or holy place), or even templum (a temple or a sacred space), the word mithraeum is the common appellation in Mithraic scholarship and is used throughout this study. — Bjørnebye

(2007).[27]:chapter: The mithraea as buildings

Whilst the majority of the Oriental cults accorded to women a considerable role in their churches, and sometimes even a preponderating one, finding in them ardent supporters of the faith, Mithra forbade their participation in his Mysteries and so deprived himself of the incalculable assistance of these propagandists. The rude discipline of the order did not permit them to take the degrees in the sacred cohorts, and, as among the Mazdeans of the Orient, they occupied only a secondary place in the society of the faithful. Among the hundreds of inscriptions that have come down to us, not one mentions either a priestess, a woman initiate, or even a donatress.[67]

... Moreover, not a single woman is listed: The repeated attempts to show that women might belong to the cult are wishful thinking (Piccottini, 1994).[68]

Porphyry moreover seems to be the only writer who makes reference to women initiates into the service and rites of Mithra, and his allusion is perhaps due to a misunderstanding.... The participation of women in the ritual was not unknown in the Eastern cults, but the predominant military influence in Mithraism seems to render it unlikely in this instance.[2]

"Justin's charge does at least make clear that Mithraic commandments did exist." [4] (pp 144–145)

Hermes addresses Julian:

"As for you ... I have granted you to know Mithras the Father. Keep his commandments, thus securing for yourself an anchor-cable and safe mooring all through your life, and, when you must leave the world, having every confidence that the god who guides you will be kindly disposed." — Clauss (2000).[4](p 144) citing Caesares (336c in the translation of W.C. Wright).

Other early evidence of the first decades BCE refers only to the reverence paid to Mithras without mentioning the mysteries: examples which may be quoted are the tomb inscriptions of King Antiochus I of Commagene at Nemrud Dagħ, and of his father Mithridates at Arsameia on the Orontes. Both the kings had erected on vast terraces a number of colossal statues seated on thrones to the honour of their ancestral gods. At Nemrud we find in their midst King Antiochus (69–34 BCE) and in the inscription Mithras is mentioned ... — Vermaseren (1963)[72]

"I ... see these figures or some of them in the impression of the remarkable royal seal of King Saussatar of Mitanni (c. 1450 BCE great-great-grandfather of Kurtiwaza), the only royal Mitannian seal that we possess ... Mithra-tauroctonos, characteristically kneeling on the bull to despatch it. We can even see also the dog and snake ... below him are twin figures, one marked by a star, each fighting lions ... below a winged disc between lions and ravens, stands a winged, human-headed lion, ..." [39](pp 467–468)

"Our earliest evidence for the Mithraic mysteries places their appearance in the middle of the 1st century BCE: The historian Plutarch says that in 67 BCE a large band of pirates based in Cilicia (a province on the southeastern coast of Asia Minor) were practicing "secret rites of Mithras". The earliest physical remains of the cult date from around the end of the 1st century CE, and Mithraism reached its height of popularity in the third century." [77]

"Traditionally there are two geographical regions where Mithraism first struck root in the Roman empire: Italy and the Danube. Italy I propose to omit, as the subject needs

considerable discussion, and the introduction of the cult there, as witnessed by its early dedicators, seems not to have been military. Before we turn to the Danube, however, there is one early event (rather than geographical location) which should perhaps be mentioned briefly in passing. This is the supposed arrival of the cult in Italy as a result of Pompey the Great's defeat of the Cilician pirates, who practised 'strange sacrifices of their own ... and celebrated certain secret rites, amongst which those of Mithra continue to the present time, having been first instituted by them'.

Suffice it to say that there is neither archaeological nor allied evidence for the arrival of Mithraism in the West at that time, nor is there any ancient literary reference, either contemporary or later. If anything, Plutarch's mention carefully omits making the point that the cult was introduced into Italy at that time or by the pirates."[78](p 250)

"Another possible piece of evidence is offered by five terracotta plaques with a tauroctone, found in Crimea and taken into the records of Mithraic monuments by Cumont and Vermaseren. If they are Mithraic, they are certainly the oldest known representations of Mithras tauroctone; the somewhat varying dates given by Russian archaeologists will set the beginning of the 1st century CE as a terminus ad quem, which is also said to have been confirmed by the stratigraphic conditions."[81](p 14)
Note 20 cites the book as Blawatsky & Kolchelenko (1966).[82]

... the area [the Crimea] is of interest mainly because of the terracotta plaques from Kerch (five, of which two are in CIMRM[35] as numbers 11 and 12): These show a bull-killing figure and their probable date (second half of 1st century BCE to first half of 1st century CE) would make them the earliest tauroctonies – if it is Mithras that they portray. Their iconography is significantly different from that of the standard tauroctony (e.g. in the Attis-like exposure of the god's genitals).[83]

"The plaques are typical Bosporan terracottas ... At the same time it must be admitted that the plaques have some strange features which make it debatable if this is really Mithra(s). Most striking is the fact that his genitals are visible as they are in the iconography of Attis, which is accentuated by a high anaxyrides. Instead of the tunic and flowing cloak he wears a kind of jacket, buttoned over the breast with only one button, perhaps the attempt of a not so skillful artist to depict a cloak. The bull is small and has a hump and the tauroctone does not plunge his knife into the flank of the bull but holds it lifted. The nudity gives it the character of a fertility god and if we want to connect it directly with the Mithraic mysteries it is indeed embarrassing that the first one of these plaques was found in a woman's tomb."[81](p 15)

"He is grasping one of the bull's horns with his left hand, and wrenching back its head; the right arm is raised to deliver the death-blow. So far, this god must be Mithras. But in sharp contrast with the usual representations [of Mithras], he is dressed in a jacket-like garment, fastened at the chest with a brooch, which leaves his genitals exposed – the iconography typical of Attis."[4](p 156)

CIMRM[35] 362 a, b = el I, VI 732 = Moretti, IGUR I 179:

SOLI | INVICTO MITHRAE | T . FLAVIUS AUG. LIB. HYGINUS | EPHEBIANUS | D.D."
but the Greek title is just "Helioi Mithrai" (Ἡλιῶι Μιθραί). The name "FLAVIUS" for an imperial freedman dates it between 70–136 CE. The Greek section refers to a pater of the cult named Lollius Rufus, evidence of the existence of the rank system at this early date.[14]

"The considerable movement [of civil servants and military] throughout the empire was of great importance to Mithraism, and even with the very fragmentary and inadequate evidence that we have it is clear that the movement of troops was a major factor in the spread of the cult. Traditionally there are two geographical regions where Mithraism first struck root: Italy and the Danube. Italy I propose to omit, as the subject needs considerable discussion, and the introduction of the cult there, as witnessed by its early dedicators, seems not to have been military. Before we turn to the Danube, however, there is one early event (rather than geographical location) which should perhaps be mentioned briefly in passing. This is the supposed arrival of the cult in Italy as a result of Pompey the Great's defeat of Cilician pirates, who practiced 'strange sacrifices of their own ... and celebrated certain secret rites, amongst which those of Mithras continue to the present time, have been first instituted by them'." (ref. Plutarch, Pompey 24–25) Suffice it to say that there is neither archaeological nor allied evidence for the arrival of Mithraism in the west at that time, nor is there any ancient literary reference, either contemporary or later. If anything, Plutarch's mention carefully omits making the point that the cult was introduced into Italy at that time or by the pirates. Turning to the Danube, the earliest dedication from that region is an altar to 'Mitrhe' [sic] set up by C. Sacidus Barbarus, a centurion of XV Appolinaris, stationed at the time at Carnuntum in Pannonia (Deutsches-Altenburg, Austria). The movements of this legion are particularly informative." The article then goes on to say that XV Appolinaris was originally based at Carnuntum, but between 62–71 CE transferred to the east, first in the Armenian campaign, and then to put down the Jewish uprising. Then 71–86 back in Carnuntum, then 86–105 intermittently in the Dacian wars, then 105–114 back in Carnuntum, and finally moved to Cappadocia in 114.[78]

The first dateable Mithraeum outside Italy is from Böckingen on the Neckar, where a centurion of the legion VIII Augustus dedicated two altars, one to Mithras and the other (dated 148) to Apollo.[78](p 263)

"At present this is the only Mithraeum known in Roman Palestine."[84](p 154)

"It is difficult to assign an exact date to the founding of the Caesarea Maritima Mithraeum. No dedicatory plaques have been discovered that might aid in the dating. The lamps found with the taurectone medallion are from the end of the first century to the late 3rd century CE. Other pottery and coins from the vault are also from this era. Therefore, it is speculated that this Mithraeum developed toward the end of the 1st century and remained active until the late 3rd century. This matches the dates assigned to the Dura-Europos and the Sidon Mithraea."[84](p 153)

... the Persian affiliation of the Mysteries is acknowledged in the earliest literary reference to them. This is by the Latin poet Statius: Writing about 80 CE, he described Mithras as one who "twists the unruly horns beneath the rocks of a Persian cave". Only a little later (c. 100 CE) Plutarch attributed an Anatolian origin to the mysteries, for according to him the Cilician pirates whom Pompey defeated in 67 BCE. "celebrated certain secret rites, amongst which those of Mithras continue to the present time, having been first instituted by them".[22](pp 468–469)

In the Cumontian scenario this episode cannot mark the definitive moment of transfer, for Mithraism in that scenario was already established in Rome, albeit on a scale too small to have left any trace in the historical or archaeological record. Nevertheless, it

could have been a spur to Mithraism's emergence on to the larger stage of popular appeal.[92]

"Hence, a place near to the equinoctial circle was assigned to Mithra as an appropriate seat. And on this account he bears the sword of Aries, which is a martial sign. He is likewise carried in the Bull, which is the sign of Venus. For Mithra, as well as the Bull, is the Demiurgus and lord of generation." — Porphyry[93]

[Porphyry's] *De antro* 6 is actually the sole explicit testimony from antiquity as to the intent of Mithraism's mysteries and the means by which that intent was realized.

Porphyry, moreover, was an intelligent and well-placed theoretician of contemporary religion, with access to predecessors' studies, now lost.[96]

In the course of the First International Congress, two scholars in particular presented devastating critiques of Cumont's Iranian hypothesis ... One, John Hinnells, was the organizer of the conference ... Of more importance in the long run, however, was the even more radical paper presented by R.L. Gordon ... — Ulansey (1991)[9](p 10)

"Since Cumont's reconstruction of the theology underlying the reliefs in terms of the Zoroastrian myth of creation depends upon the symbolic expression of the conflict of good and evil, we must now conclude that his reconstruction simply will not stand. It receives no support from the Iranian material and is in fact in conflict with the ideas of that tradition as they are represented in the extant texts. Above all, it is a theoretical reconstruction which does not accord with the actual Roman iconography. What, then, do the reliefs depict? And how can we proceed in any study of Mithraism? I would accept with R. Gordon that Mithraic scholars must in future start with the Roman evidence, not by outlining Zoroastrian myths and then making the Roman iconography fit that scheme. ... Unless we discover Euboulus' history of Mithraism we are never likely to have conclusive proof for any theory. Perhaps all that can be hoped for is a theory which is in accordance with the evidence and commends itself by (mere) plausibility." [110](pp 303–304)

"Indeed, one can go further and say that the portrayal of Mithras given by Cumont is not merely unsupported by Iranian texts but is actually in serious conflict with known Iranian theology. Cumont reconstructs a primordial life of the god on earth, but such a concept is unthinkable in terms of known, specifically Zoroastrian, Iranian thought where the gods never, and apparently never could, live on earth. To interpret Roman Mithraism in terms of Zoroastrian thought and to argue for an earthly life of the god is to combine irreconcilables. If it is believed that Mithras had a primordial life on earth, then the concept of the god has changed so fundamentally that the Iranian background has become virtually irrelevant." [110](p 292)

"Since the 1970s scholars of western Mithraism have generally agreed that Cumont's master narrative of east-west transfer is unsustainable"; although he adds that "recent trends in the scholarship on Iranian religion, by modifying the picture of that religion prior to the birth of the western mysteries, now render a revised Cumontian scenario of east-west transfer and continuities now viable." [40]

"Beyond these three Mithraea [in Syria and Palestine], there are only a handful of objects from Syria that may be identified with Mithraism. Archaeological evidence of Mithraism in Syria is therefore in marked contrast to the abundance of Mithraea and materials that have been located in the rest of the Roman Empire. Both the frequency

and the quality of Mithraic materials is greater in the rest of the empire. Even on the western frontier in Britain, archaeology has produced rich Mithraic materials, such as those found at Walbrook.

If one accepts Cumont's theory that Mithraism began in Iran, moved west through Babylon to Asia Minor, and then to Rome, one would expect that the cult left its traces in those locations. Instead, archaeology indicates that Roman Mithraism had its epicenter in Rome. Wherever its ultimate place of origin may have been, the fully developed religion known as Mithraism seems to have begun in Rome and been carried to Syria by soldiers and merchants. None of the Mithraic materials or temples in Roman Syria except the Commagene sculpture bears any date earlier than the late first or early second century. [footnote in cited text: 30. Mithras, identified with a Phrygian cap and the nimbus about his head, is depicted in colossal statuary erected by King Antiochus I of Commagene, 69–34 BCE. (see Vermaseren, CIRM[35] 1.53–56). There are no other literary or archaeological evidences to indicate that the religion of Mithras as it was known among the Romans in the second to fourth centuries AD was practiced in Commagene]. While little can be proved from silence, it seems that the relative lack of archaeological evidence from Roman Syria would argue against the traditional theories for the origins of Mithraism."[3]

It originated in Vedic, India, migrated to Persia by way of Babylon, and then westward through the Hellenized East, and finally across the length and breadth of the Hellenistic-Roman world. On its westward journey, it incorporated many of the features of the cultures in which it found itself.[125]

"The first important expansion of the mysteries in the Empire seems to have occurred relatively rapidly late in the reign of Antoninus Pius and under Marcus Aurelius (9). By that date, it is clear, the mysteries were fully institutionalised and capable of relatively stereotyped self-reproduction through the medium of an agreed, and highly complex, symbolic system reduced in iconography and architecture to a readable set of 'signs'. Yet we have good reason to believe that the establishment of at least some of those signs is to be dated at least as early as the Flavian period or in the very earliest years of the second century. Beyond that we cannot go ..." [126](pp150–151)

"... the astonishing spread of the cult in the later 2nd and early 3rd centuries AD ... This extraordinary expansion, documented by the archaeological monuments ..." [4](p 25)

"The cult of Mithras never became one of those supported by the state with public funds, and was never admitted to the official list of festivals celebrated by the state and army – at any rate as far as the latter is known to us from the *Feriale Duranum*, the religious calendar of the units at Dura-Europos in Coele Syria;" [where there was a Mithraeum] "the same is true of all the other mystery cults too." He adds that at the individual level, various individuals did hold roles both in the state cults and the priesthood of Mithras.[4](p 24)

"Mithraism declined with the rise to power of Christianity, until the beginning of the fifth century, when Christianity became strong enough to exterminate by force rival religions such as Mithraism." [130]

"As a mystery religion it engulfed the Roman empire during the first four centuries of our era. Mithraic sanctuaries are found from Roman Arabia to Britain, from the Danube to the Sahara, wherever the Roman soldier went. Christian apologetics fiercely fought the

cult they feared., and during the late 4th century CE, as a victim of the Judaeo-Christian spirit of intolerance, Roman Mithraism was suppressed, its sanctuaries destroyed together with the last vestiges of religious freedom in the empire." [131]

Michael Speidel, who specializes in military history, associates Mithras with Orion. [132]

The cult was vigorously opposed by Christian polemicists, especially by Justin and Tertullian, because of perceived similarities between it and early Christianity. And with the anti-pagan decrees of the Christian emperor Theodosius during the final decade of the fourth century, Mithraism disappeared from the history of religions as a viable religious practice. [6]

"Mithras also found a place in the 'pagan revival' that occurred, particularly in the western empire, in the latter half of the 4th century CE. For a brief period, especially in Rome, the cult enjoyed, along with others, a last efflorescence, for which we have evidence from among the highest circles of the senatorial order. One of these senators was Rufius Caeionius Sabinus, who in 377 CE dedicated an altar" to a long list of gods that includes Mithras. [4] (pp 29–30)

"19. He let loose Greed, Needfulness, [Pestilence,] Disease, Hunger, Illness, Vice and Lethargy on the body of Gav' and Gayomard. 20. Before his coming to the 'Gav', Ohrmazd gave the healing Cannabis, which is what one calls 'banj', to the 'Gav' to eat, and rubbed it before her eyes, so that her discomfort, owing to smiting, [sin] and injury, might decrease; she immediately became feeble and ill, her milk dried up, and she passed away." [136]

10: "Since, however, a cavern is an image and symbol of the world ..." [139]

2: "For, as Eubulus says, Zoroaster was the first who consecrated in the neighbouring mountains of Persia, a spontaneously produced cave, florid, and having fountains, in honour of Mithra, the maker and father of all things; 12: a cave, according to Zoroaster, bearing a resemblance of the world, which was fabricated by Mithra. But the things contained in the cavern being arranged according to commensurate intervals, were symbols of the mundane elements and climates." [93]

... The Mithras Liturgy reflects the world of Mithraism, but precisely how it relates to other expressions of the mysteries of Mithras is unclear. ... With the leg of the bull, interpreted astronomically, the Mithraic god, or Mithras, turns the sphere of heaven around, and if the text suggests that Mithras "moves heaven and turns it back (antistrephousa)," Mithras may be responsible for the astronomical precession of the equinoxes, the progressive change in the earth's orientation in space caused by a wobble in the earth's rotation (so Ulansey). [144]

"I sometimes permit myself to say that, if Christianity had not carried the day, Mithraicism would have become the religion of the world. It had its mysterious meetings: its chapels, which bore a strong resemblance to little churches. It forged a very lasting bond of brotherhood between its initiates: it had a Eucharist, a Supper ..." — Renan (2004) [153]

"Many people have erroneously supposed that all religions have a sort of universalist tendency or ambition. In the case of Mithraism, such an ambition has often been taken for granted and linked to a no less questionable assumption, that there was a rivalry between Mithras and Christ for imperial favour. ... If Christianity had failed, the Roman empire would never have become Mithraist." [155]

"Mithraism proselytized energetically to the west, and for a time presented a formidable challenge to Christianity; but it is not yet known how far, or how effectively, it penetrated eastward. A Mithraeum has been uncovered at the Parthian fortress-town of Dura-Europos on the Euphrates; but Zoroastrianism itself may well have been a barrier to its spread into Iran proper." [157]

A useful topographic survey, with map, by F. Coarelli (1979) lists 40 actual or possible mithraea (the latter inferred from find-spots, with the sensible proviso that a mithraeum will not necessarily correspond to every find). Principally from comparisons of size and population with Ostia, Coarelli calculates that there will have been in Rome "not less than 680–690" mithraea in all ... [8]

Today more than four hundred locations of Mithraic worship have been identified in every area of the Roman Empire. Mithraea have been found as far west as Britain and as far east as Dura-Europas. Between the second and fourth centuries C.E. Mithraism may have vied with Christianity for domination of the Roman world. [5] (p 147)

... the study of Mithraism is also of great important for our understanding of what Arnold Toynbee has called the 'Crucible of Christianity', the cultural matrix in which the Christian religion came to birth out of the civilization of the ancient Mediterranean. For Mithraism was one of Christianity's major competitors in the Roman Empire ... No doubt Renan's statement is somewhat exaggerated. — D. Ulansey (1991) [9] (pp 3–4)

References

Beck, Roger (20 July 2002). "Mithraism". *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (Online ed.). Archived from the original on 20 May 2020. Retrieved 14 March 2011.

Geden, A.S. (15 October 2004) [1925]. *Select Passages Illustrating Mithraism*. Kessinger Publishing. p. 51ff. ISBN 978-1-4179-8229-5. Retrieved 28 March 2011.

Hopfe, Lewis M. (1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. pp. 147–158, 156.

Clauss, Manfred (2000). *The Roman Cult of Mithras: The god and his mysteries*. Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 0-415-92977-6. ISBN 0-7486-1396-X

Hopfe, Lewis M.; Richardson, Henry Neil (September 1994). "Archaeological Indications on the Origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. ISBN 978-0-931464-73-7. Retrieved 19 March 2011.

Martin, Luther H. (30 December 2004). "Foreword". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Ashgate Publishing. p. xiii. ISBN 978-0-7546-4081-3.

Beck, Roger (17 February 2011). "The pagan shadow of Christ?". BBC-History. Archived from the original on 23 October 2019. Retrieved 4 June 2011.

Coarelli, Filippo; Beck, Roger; Haase, Wolfgang (1984). *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt* [The Rise and Decline of the Roman World] (in German). Walter de Gruyter. p. 202 ff. ISBN 978-3-11-010213-0. Retrieved 20 March 2011.

Ulansey, David (1991). *Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-506788-6.

Origen. "Contra Celsus". Book 6, Chapter 22. Archived from the original on 3 July 2017. Retrieved 11 November 2012 – via newadvent.org.

Lewis, Charlton T.; Short, Charles (eds.). "Mithras". A Latin Dictionary. Archived from the original on 3 October 2020. Retrieved 20 February 2021 – via Tufts University.

Encyclopedia of World Religions. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc. 2006. p. 509. ISBN 978-1-59339-491-2.

Xenophon. *Cyropaedia*. 7.5.53. cited in

Liddell, Henry George; Scott, Robert (eds.). "Μίθρας". A Greek-English Lexicon. Tufts University. Archived from the original on 24 January 2023. Retrieved 24 January 2023 – via perseus.tufts.edu.

Gordon, Richard L. (1978). "The date and significance of CIMRM 593 (British Museum, Townley collection)" (PDF). *Journal of Mithraic Studies*. II: 148–174. Archived from the original (PDF) on 25 May 2010.

E.g. in "Hymn 59". *Rig Veda*. Vol. 3. Archived from the original on 12 March 2019. Retrieved 13 May 2011.

Speidel, Michael (1980). *Mithras-Orion: Greek hero and Roman army god*. Brill. p. 1 ff. ISBN 978-90-04-06055-5 – via Google Books.

Hopfe, Lewis M.; Richardson, Henry Neil (September 1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. p. 150. ISBN 978-0-931464-73-7. Retrieved 19 March 2011. All theories of the origin of Mithraism acknowledge a connection, however vague, to the Mithra / Mitra figure of ancient Aryan religion.

Turcan, Robert (1996). *The cults of the Roman Empire*. Wiley-Blackwell. p. 196. ISBN 978-0-631-20047-5. Retrieved 19 March 2011.

Thieme, Paul (October–December 1960). "The 'Aryan' gods of the Mitanni treaties". *Journal of the American Oriental Society*. 80 (4): 301–317. doi:10.2307/595878. JSTOR 595878.

"Mithraism" at Encyclopædia Iranica

Hinnells, John R. (1990). "Introduction: The questions asked and to be asked". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Studies in Mithraism*. Rome: L'Erma di Bretschneider. p. 11. The god is unique in being worshipped in four distinct religions: Hinduism (as Mitra), in Iranian Zoroastrianism and Manicheism (as Mithra), and in the Roman Empire (as Mithras).

Boyce, Mary; Grenet, Frantz (1975). *Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule*. Vol. Part 1. Brill. pp. 468–469. ISBN 90-04-09271-4. Retrieved 16 March 2011.

Mazur, Zeke. "Harmonious Opposition (Part I): Pythagorean themes of cosmogonic mediation in the Roman mysteries of Mithras" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 21 November 2011. Retrieved 14 June 2011.

Näsström, Britt-Marie. "The sacrifices of Mithras" (PDF). Archived (PDF) from the original on 9 April 2016. Retrieved 4 April 2011. He is wearing a Phrygian cap and a wind-filled cloak, and, most remarkable of all, his head is turned in the other direction as if he would not look at his own deed. Still, this sacrifice is a guarantee of salvation for the participants.

Hinnells, J.R. (1976). "The iconography of Cautes and Cautopates: The data". *Journal of Mithraic Studies*. 1: 36–67.

See also Malandra, William W. "Cautes and Cautopates". *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

[permanent dead link]

Griffith, Alison (1996). "Mithraism". L'Ecole Initiative. Archived from the original on 27 April 2004. Retrieved 2 April 2004.

Bjørnebye, Jonas (2007). *Hic locus est felix, sanctus, piusque benignus: The cult of Mithras in fourth century Rome* (PhD thesis).

Klauck, Hans-Josef; McNeil, Brian (December 2003). *The Religious Context of Early Christianity: A guide to Graeco-Roman religions*. T & T Clark Ltd. pp. 146ff. ISBN 978-0-567-08943-4. Retrieved 4 September 2011.

Beck, Roger (2006). *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. p. 21. ISBN 978-0-19-814089-4. Often, the mithraeum was embellished elsewhere with secondary exemplars of the tauroctony, and there also seem to have been small portable versions, perhaps for private devotion.

Beck, Roger (2004). "In the place of the lion: Mithras in the tauroctony". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Ashgate Publishing. pp. 270–276. ISBN 978-0-7546-4081-3. Archived from the original on 14 April 2023. Retrieved 23 February 2023.

Beck, Roger (2007). *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire*. London, UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 27–28. ISBN 978-0-19-921613-0.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1951). "The miraculous birth of Mithras". In Gerevich, László (ed.). *Studia Archaeologica*. Brill. pp. 93–109. Retrieved 4 October 2011.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1951). Gerevich, László (ed.). *Studia Archaeologica*. Brill. p. 108. Retrieved 4 October 2011.

Commodian. *Instructiones*. 1.13. The unconquered one was born from a rock, if he is regarded as a god.

See also the image of "Mithras petra genetrix Terme", inset above.

Vermaseren, Maarten Jozef (1960) [1956]. *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis mithriacae*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff.

von Gall, Hubertus (1978). "The lion-headed and the human-headed god in the Mithraic mysteries". In Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques (ed.). *Études mithriaques*. p. 511.

Cumont, Franz. *The Mysteries of Mithras*. p. 105. Archived from the original on 2 July 2017. Retrieved 13 February 2011.

Jackson, Howard M. (July 1985). "The meaning and function of the leontocephaline in Roman Mithraism". *Numen*. 32 (1): 17–45. doi:10.1163/156852785X00148. S2CID 144419653.

Barnett, R.D. (1975). "[no title cited]". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Mithraic Studies*. International Congress of Mithraic Studies. Vol. II. Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press. pp. 467–468.

Beck, Roger B. (2004). "Cumont's master narrative". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Aldershot: Ashgate. p. 28. ISBN 0-7546-4081-7. Archived from the original on 4 May 2023. Retrieved 23 February 2023.

Vermaseren, Maarten Jozef; van Essen, Carel Claudius (1965). *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome*. Brill. p. 238. Retrieved 3 April 2011.

"Roman religion". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (online ed.). Archived from the original on 3 September 2011. Retrieved 4 July 2011.

Beck, Roger (1987). "Merkelbach's Mithras". *Phoenix*. 41 (3): 296–316.

doi:10.2307/1088197. JSTOR 1088197.

Clauss, Manfred (1990). *Mithras: Kult und Mysterien* (in German). München, DE: Beck. p. 70.

"Mithraism". *Sodalitas Graeciae* (Nova Roma) / Religion from the Papyri. Nova Roma. 11 March 2009. Archived from the original on 18 May 2013. Retrieved 7 September 2013.

Janson, Horst Woldemar; Janson, Anthony F. (2004). Touborg, Sarah; Moore, Julia; Oppenheimer, Margaret; Castro, Anita (eds.). *History of Art: The Western Tradition*. Vol. 1 (Revised 6th ed.). Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Pearson Education. p. 220. ISBN 0-13-182622-0.

Brashear, William M. (1992). *A Mithraic catechism from Egypt: (P. Berol. 21196). Supplementband Tyche*. Vol. 1. Staatliche Museen Preußischer Kulturbesitz (contributor). Verlag Adolf Holzhausens. ISBN 9783900518073. Archived from the original on 26 March 2023. Retrieved 6 August 2022 – via Google Books.

Meyer, Marvin W. (1976). *The "Mithras liturgy"*. Missoula, MT: Scholars Press for the Society of Biblical Literature. ISBN 0891301135.

Francis, E.D. (1971). "Mithraic graffiti from Dura-Europos". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 2. Manchester University Press. pp. 424–445.

Burkert, Walter (1987). *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Harvard University Press. p. 41. ISBN 0-674-03387-6.

Price, S.; Kearns, E. (eds.). *Oxford Dictionary of Classical Myth and Religion*.

Tripolitis, Antonía (2002). *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 55. ISBN 978-0-8028-4913-7.

Beck, Roger (2006). *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire*. London, UK: Oxford University Press. pp. 16, 85–87, 288–289. ISBN 978-0-19-921613-0.

Hinnells, John R., ed. (1971). *Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 2. Manchester University Press. plate 25.

Burkert, Walter (1987). *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Harvard University Press. p. 10. ISBN 0-674-03387-6.

The Suda reference given is 3: 394, M 1045 (Adler).[4](p 102)

The Gregory reference given is to Oratio 4.70 .[4](p 102)

Jerome. "To Laeta, ch. 2". *Letters*. Vol. 107. Archived from the original on 7 October 2008.

Clauss, Manfred (1990). "Die sieben Grade des Mithras-Kultes" [The seven grades of the Mithras cult]. *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (in German). 82: 183–194.

Griffith, Alison. "Mithraism in the private and public lives of 4th-c. senators in Rome". *Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies*. Archived from the original on 28 September 2010. Retrieved 10 January 2010.

... "the followers of Mithras were the 'initiates of the theft of the bull, united by the handshake of the illustrious father'." (Err. prof. relig. 5.2)[4](p 105)

Healy, Patrick J., ed. (1909). "Firmicus Maternus". *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York, NY: Robert Appleton Company. Archived from the original on 2 July 2017. Retrieved 8 April 2011 – via newadvent.org.

Burkert, Walter (1987). *Ancient mystery cults*. Harvard University Press. p. 16. ISBN 978-0-674-03387-0. Retrieved 4 November 2011. Taking the right hand is the old Iranian

form of a promise of allegiance, ...

Beck, Roger (2000). "Ritual, myth, doctrine, and initiation in the Mysteries of Mithras: New evidence from a cult vessel". *The Journal of Roman Studies*. 90 (90): 145–180. doi:10.2307/300205. JSTOR 300205. S2CID 161475387.

Merkelbach, Reinhold (1995). "Das Mainzer Mithrasgefäß" [The Mithras vessel from Mainz] (PDF). *Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik* (in German) (108): 1–6. Archived (PDF) from the original on 18 July 2020. Retrieved 17 October 2008.

Martin, Luther H. (2004). "Ritual competence and Mithraic ritual". In Wilson, Brian C. (ed.). *Religion as a Human Capacity: A festschrift in honor of E. Thomas Lawson*. BRILL. p. 257.

Cumont, Franz (1903). *The Mysteries of Mithras*. p. 173. Retrieved 6 July 2011. cited in Gordon, Richard (2005). "Mithraism". In Jones, Lindsay (ed.). *Encyclopedia Of Religion*. Vol. 9 (2nd ed.). Thomas Gale, Macmillan Reference USA. p. 6090.

David, Jonathan (2000). "The Exclusion of women in the Mithraic Mysteries: Ancient or modern?". *Numen*. 47 (2): 121–141. doi:10.1163/156852700511469.

Tertullian. *De Corona Militis*. 15.3.

Grenet, Franz (2016). "Mithra: ii. Iconography in Iran and Central Asia". *Encyclopædia Iranica* (online ed.). Retrieved 19 May 2016.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1963). *Mithras: the Secret God*. London, UK: Chatto and Windus. p. 29.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1956). *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis mithriacae*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. CIMRM 29. Head of a beardless Mithras in Phrygian cap, point of which is missing.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1956). *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis mithriacae*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. CIMRM 28. The gods are represented in a sitting position on a throne and are: Apollo-Mithras (see below); Tyche-Commagene; Zeus-Ahura-Mazda; Antiochus himself and finally Ares-Artagnes.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1956). *Corpus inscriptionum et monumentorum religionis mithriacae*. The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff. CIMRM 32, verse 55.

Beck, Roger. "On Becoming a Mithraist New Evidence for the Propagation of the Mysteries". In Leif E. Vaage; et al. (eds.). *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity*. p. 182. The origins and spread of the Mysteries are matters of perennial debate among scholars of the cult.

Ulansey, David. "The Cosmic Mysteries of Mithras". Archived from the original on 15 April 2008. Retrieved 20 March 2011.

Daniels, C.M. (1971). "The role of the Roman army in the spread and practice of Mithraism". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Mithraic Studies. The First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 2. Manchester University Press (published 1975). pp. 249–274.

Beck, R. (1998). "The mysteries of Mithras: A new account of their genesis". *Journal of Roman Studies*. 88: 115–128. doi:10.2307/300807. JSTOR 300807. S2CID 162251490.

Gordon, Richard L. (1978). "The date and significance of CIMRM 593 (British Museum, Townley Collection)" (PDF). *Journal of Mithraic Studies*. II: 148–174. Archived from the original (PDF) on 25 May 2010.

Beskow, Per. "The routes of early Mithraism". In Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques (ed.). *Études mithriaques*.

Blawatsky, W.; Kolchelenko, G. (1966). *Le culte de Mithra sur la cote septentrionale de la Mer Noire*. Leiden. p. 14 ff.

Beck, Roger (1984). "Mithraism since Franz Cumont". *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt [Ascent and Descent in the Roman World]*. Religion Heidentum: Römische Götterkulte, Orientalische Kulte in der Römischen Welt. Vol. II. p. 2019. 17.4. Archived from the original on 14 April 2023. Retrieved 6 August 2022 – via Google Books.

Hopfe, Lewis M. (1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. pp. 147–158.

Statius. *Thebaid*. 1.719–720.

"Latin text". The Latin Library. Archived from the original on 9 September 2017. Retrieved 12 April 2011.

"English translation". Classical e-Text. Translated by Mozey, J.H. Archived from the original on 29 September 2017. Retrieved 12 April 2011 – via theoi.com.

The prayer begins at
Statius. *Thebaid*. 1.696.

"Latin text". The Latin Library. Archived from the original on 9 September 2017. Retrieved 12 April 2011.

"English translation". Classical e-Text. Translated by Mozey, J.H. Archived from the original on 29 September 2017. Retrieved 12 April 2011 – via theoi.com.

Justin Martyr. *First and Second Apologies of Justin Martyr*. Chapter 66.

Plutarch. "Life of Pompey". *Lives*. 24. Archived from the original on 31 July 2022.

Retrieved 19 February 2021 – via penelope.uchicago.edu. — refers to events c. 68 BCE
Appian *Mith* 14.92 cited in [9](p 89)

Francis, E.D. (1971). "Plutarch's Mithraic pirates: An appendix to the article by Franz Cumont 'The Dura Mithraeum'". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Mithraic Studies. The First International Congress of Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 1. Manchester University Press (published 1975). pp. 207–210.

The reference to Servius is in a

Hinnells, John R. (1975). lengthy footnote for page 208. Manchester University Press. ISBN 9780719005367. Archived from the original on 15 May 2023. Retrieved 23 February 2023 – via Google Books..

Dio Cassius. [no title cited]. 63.5.2.

Beck, Roger (20 July 2002). "Mithraism". *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (online ed.). Archived from the original on 20 May 2020. Retrieved 15 May 2011.

Porphyry. *De Antro Nympharum [On the Cave of the Nymphs]*. 2. Archived from the original on 22 August 2017. Retrieved 9 October 2009.

Turcan, Robert (1975). *Mithras Platonicus*. Leiden, NL.
cited by Beck (1987)[43](p 301–302)

Beck, Roger; Martin, Luther H.; Whitehouse, Harvey (2004). *Theorizing Religions Past: Archaeology, history, and cognition*. Rowman Altamira. p. 101 ff. ISBN 978-0-7591-0621-5. Retrieved 28 March 2011.

Beck, Roger (2006). *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire*. Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press. p. 17. ISBN 978-0-19-814089-4.

Greek Magical Papyrus. Paris, FR: Bibliothèque Nationale. Suppl. gr. 574.

Meyer, Marvin (2006). "The Mithras Liturgy". In Levine, A.J.; Allison, Dale C. Jr.; Crossan, John Dominic (eds.). *The Historical Jesus in Context*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. ISBN 0-691-00991-0.

The reference is at line 482 of the Great Magical Papyrus of Paris.[98](p 180) The entire Mithras Liturgy comprises lines 475–834 of the papyrus.

Dieterich, Albrecht (1910). *Eine Mithrasliturgie* (in German) (2nd ed.). Leipzig, DE: B.G. Teubner. pp. 1–2. [ark:/13960/t03x8jd9d](https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:hbz:5:1-36060-p0013-8). — Greek source with German translation

The "Mithras Liturgy": Text, translation, and commentary. Tübingen, DE: Mohr Siebeck. 2003.

Gordon, Richard (March 2005). "Probably not Mithras". *The Classical Review*. 55 (1): 99–100. doi:10.1093/clrevj/bni059.

Franz Grenet, 2016. "Mithra ii. Iconography in Iran and Central Asia", *Encyclopædia Iranica*, online edition (accessed 19 May 2016).

Cumont, Franz (1894–1900). *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra*. Brussels: H. Lamertin.

Cumont, Franz (1903). *The Mysteries of Mithra*. Translated by Thomas J. McCormack. Chicago: Open Court. Accessible online at Internet Sacred Text Archive: *The Mysteries of Mithra Index* Archived 6 October 2017 at the Wayback Machine (accessed 13 February 2011)

Hopfe, Lewis M.; Richardson, Henry Neil (September 1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering ancient stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. pp. 148ff. ISBN 978-0-931464-73-7. Retrieved 19 March 2011 – via Google Books. Franz Cumont, one of the greatest students of Mithraism, theorized that the roots of the Roman mystery religion were in ancient Iran. He identified the ancient Aryan deity who appears in Persian literature as Mithras with the Hindu god Mitra of the Vedic hymns.

Cumont, Franz (1903). *The Mysteries of Mithra*. p. 107. Archived 2 July 2017 at the Wayback Machine (accessed 13 February 2011)

Cumont, Franz (1903). *The Mysteries of Mithra*. p. 104. Archived 2 July 2017 at the Wayback Machine (accessed 13 February 2011)

John R. Hinnells, "Reflections on the bull-slaying scene" in *Mithraic studies*, vol. 2, pp. 303–304: "Nevertheless we would not be justified in swinging to the opposite extreme from Cumont and Campbell and denying all connection between Mithraism and Iran."

Hinnells, John R. (1975). "Reflections on the bull-slaying scene". *Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 2. Manchester University Press. ISBN 9780719005367.

Gordon, R.L. "Franz Cumont and the doctrines of Mithraism". In Hinnells, John R. (ed.). *Mithraic Studies*. Vol. 1. pp. 215 ff.

Martin, Luther H. (2004). "Foreword". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Aldershot: Ashgate. ISBN 0-7546-4081-7.

Bianchi, Ugo. "The Second International Congress of Mithraic Studies, Tehran, September 1975" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 24 July 2011. Retrieved 20 March 2011. I welcome the present tendency to question in historical terms the relations between Eastern and Western Mithraism, which should not mean obliterating what was clear to the Romans themselves, that Mithras was a 'Persian' (in wider perspective: an

Indo-Iranian) god.

Boyce, Mary (2001). "Mithra the King and Varuna the Master". *Festschrift für Helmut Humbach zum 80*. Trier: WWT. pp. 243, n.18

Beck, Roger (2006). *The Religion of the Mithras cult in the Roman empire*. Great Britain: Oxford University Press. pp. 48–50. ISBN 978-0-19-814089-4.

Edwell, Peter. "Roger Beck, *The Religion of the Mithras Cult in the Roman Empire: Mysteries of the Unconquered Sun*. Reviewed by Peter Edwell, Macquarie University, Sydney". Archived from the original on 10 August 2011. Retrieved 14 June 2011. The study of the ancient mystery cult of Mithraism has been heavily influenced over the last century by the pioneering work of Franz Cumont followed by that of M. J. Vermaseren. Ever since Cumont's volumes first appeared in the 1890s, his ideas on Mithraism have been influential, particularly with regard to the quest for Mithraic doctrine. His emphasis on the Iranian features of the cult is now less influential with the Iranising influences generally played down in scholarship over the last thirty years. While the long shadow cast by Cumont is sometimes susceptible to exaggeration, recent research such as that of Robert Turcan demonstrates that Cumont's influence is still strong.

Belayche, Nicole. "Religious Actors in Daily Life: Practices and Related Beliefs". In Jörg Rüpke (ed.). *A Companion to Roman Religion*. p. 291. Cumont, who still stands as an authoritative scholar for historians of religions, analyzed the diffusion of "oriental religions" as filling a psychological gap and satisfying new spiritualistic needs (1929: 24–40).

Beck, Roger. "On Becoming a Mithraist New Evidence for the Propagation of the Mysteries". In Leif E. Vaage; et al. (eds.). *Religious Rivalries in the Early Roman Empire and the Rise of Christianity*. p. 182. The old Cumontian model of formation in, and diffusion from, Anatolia (see Cumont 1956a, 11–32; cf. pp. 33–84 on propagation in the West) is by no means dead – nor should it be. On the role of the army in the spread of Mithraism, see Daniels 1975.

Beck, Roger (2002). "Mithraism". *Encyclopædia Iranica*. Costa Mesa: Mazda Pub. Archived from the original on 20 May 2020. Retrieved 28 October 2007. Mithras – moreover, a Mithras who was identified with the Greek Sun god Helios – was one of the deities of the syncretic Graeco-Iranian royal cult founded by Antiochus I (q.v.), king of the small but prosperous buffer state of Commagene (q.v.) in the mid 1st century BCE.

Beck, Roger. "The mysteries of Mithras: A new account of their genesis" (PDF). Retrieved 23 March 2011. ... It may properly be called a 'Cumontian scenario' for two reasons: First, because it looks again to Anatolia and Anatolians; Secondly, and more importantly, because it hews to the methodological line first set by Cumont.

Beck, R., 2002: "Discontinuity's weaker form of argument postulates re-invention among and for the denizens of the Roman empire (or certain sections thereof), but re-invention by a person or persons of some familiarity with Iranian religion in a form current on its western margins in the first century CE. Merkelbach (1984: pp. 75–77), expanding on a suggestion of M. P. Nilsson, proposes such a founder from eastern Anatolia, working in court circles in Rome. So does Beck (1998), with special focus on the dynasty of Commagene (see above). Jakobs 1999 proposes a similar scenario."

Reinhold Merkelbach, *Mithras*, Königstein, 1984, ch. 75–77

Beck, Roger (20 July 2002). "Mithraism". *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, Online Edition.

Archived from the original on 20 May 2020. Retrieved 16 May 2011. The time has come to review the principal scholarship which has argued for transmission and continuity based on the postulated similarities ... three argue for continuity in the strongest terms. A.D.H. Bivar (1998, and earlier studies mentioned there) argues that western Mithraism was but one of several manifestations of Mithra-worship current in antiquity across a wide swathe of Asia and Europe. L.A. Campbell (1968) argues in the Cumontian tradition ... extraordinarily detailed and learned form of Zoroastrian Mazdaism. A continuity as thoroughgoing, though not quite so systematic ideologically, was proposed in several studies by G. Widengren (1965: pp. 222–232; 1966; 1980).

Pourshariati, Parvaneh (September 2019). *The Literary Holy Grail of Mithraic Studies, East and West: The Parthian Epic of Samak-e 'Ayyar*. 9th European Conference of Iranian Studies (video). Berlin. Archived from the original on 31 January 2021. Retrieved 5 February 2021.

Tripolitis, Antonía (2002). *Religions of the Hellenistic-Roman Age*. Wm.B. Eerdmans Publishing. p. 3. ISBN 978-0-8028-4913-7.

Gordon, Richard L. (1978). "The date and significance of CIMRM 593 (British Museum, Townley Collection)". *Journal of Mithraic Studies*. II: 148–174.

Clauss (2000),[4](p 25) referring to Porphyry, *De Abstinencia*, 2.56 and 4.16.3 (for Pallas) and *De antro nymphaeum* 6 (for Euboulus and his history).

Loeb, D. Magie (1932). *Scriptores Historiae Augustae: Commodus*. pp. IX.6: *Sacra Mithriaca homicidio vero polluit, cum illic aliquid ad speciem timoris vel dici vel fingi soleat* "He desecrated the rites of Mithras with actual murder, although it was customary in them merely to say or pretend something that would produce an impression of terror".

Burckhardt, Jacob (1852). *The Age of Constantine the Great*. University of California Press. p. 176. ISBN 978-0-520-04680-1.

Ulansey, David. "The Cosmic Mysteries of Mithras". Archived from the original on 15 April 2008. Retrieved 20 March 2011.

Speidel, Michael (1980). *Mithras-Orion: Greek hero and Roman army god*. Brill. p. 1. ISBN 978-90-04-06055-5. Retrieved 27 March 2011.

Speidel, Michael P. (August 1997) [1980]. *Mithras-Orion: Greek hero and Roman army god*. Brill Academic Publishers. ISBN 90-04-06055-3.

Cumont, Franz (1903). McCormack, Thomas J. (trans.) (ed.). *The Mysteries of Mithra*. Chicago: Open Court. ISBN 0-486-20323-9. pp. 206 Archived 6 October 2017 at the Wayback Machine: "A few clandestine conventicles may, with stubborn persistence, have been held in the subterranean retreats of the palaces. The cult of the Persian god possibly existed as late as the fifth century in certain remote cantons of the Alps and the Vosges. For example, devotion to the Mithraic rites long persisted in the tribe of the Anauni, masters of a flourishing valley, of which a narrow defile closed the mouth." This is unreferenced; but the French text in *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux mystères de Mithra* tom. 1, p. 348 has a footnote.

humphries, mark (10 December 2008). Susan Ashbrook Harvey, David G. Hunter (ed.). *The Oxford handbook of early Christian studies*. Oxford University Press. pp. 95–. ISBN 978-0-19-927156-6. Retrieved 3 April 2011. In some instances, the deliberate concealment of Mithraic cult objects could suggest precautions were being taken against Christian attacks; but elsewhere, such as along the Rhine frontier, coin

sequences suggest that Mithraic shrines were abandoned in the context of upheavals resulting from barbarian invasions, and that purely religious considerations cannot explain the end of Mithraism in that region (Sauer 1996).

Vermaseren, M. J. (1965). *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome*. Brill. p. 115. Retrieved 3 April 2011. The ground-plan ... shows clearly that the presbytery of the Church lies over the ante-Room V of the Mithraeum and that the apse covers the first part of the main hall W, including the niches of Cautes and Cautopates. One cannot fail to see the symbolism of this arrangement, which expresses in concrete terms that Christ keeps Mithras "under". The same also applies at S. Clemente.

The Greater [Bundahishn]. IV.19-20. Archived from the original on 20 October 2017. Retrieved 9 October 2009.

Hinnels, John R. "Reflections on the bull-slaying scene". *Mithraic Studies. The First International Conference on Mithraic Studies*. Vol. II. Manchester University Press. pp. 290–312.

Ulansey, David (1989). *The Origins of the Mithraic Mysteries*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-505402-4. (1991 revised edition[9])

Porphyry. *De Antro Nympharum [On the Cave of the Nymphs]*. 10. Archived from the original on 22 August 2017. Retrieved 9 October 2009.

Hopfe, Lewis M. (1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. pp. 147–158, 154.

Beck, Roger (2004). "Astral symbolism in the tauroctony: A statistical demonstration of the extreme improbability of unintended coincidence in the selection of elements in the composition". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Ashgate Publishing. p. 257. ISBN 978-0-7546-4081-3.

Beck, Roger (2004). "The rise and fall of astral identifications of the tauroctonous Mithras". *Beck on Mithraism: Collected works with new essays*. Ashgate Publishing. p. 236. ISBN 978-0-7546-4081-3.

Jelbert, Rebecca (2022). "Illuminating Mithraic Iconography: Mithras, God of Light, as the Milky Way". *Culture and Cosmos*. 26: 51–78. doi:10.46472/CC.0126.0205. S2CID 258253505.

Meyer, Marvin (2006). "The Mithras Liturgy". In Levine, A.J.; Allison, Dale C. Jr.; Crossan, John Dominic (eds.). *The historical Jesus in context*. New Jersey: Princeton University Press. pp. 179–180. ISBN 0-691-00991-0.

McIntosh, Jane; Chrisp, Peter; Parker, Philip; Gibson, Carrie; Grant, R. G.; Regan, Sally (October 2014). *History of the World in 1,000 Objects*. New York: DK and the Smithsonian. p. 83. ISBN 978-1-4654-2289-7.

Burkert, Walter (1987). *Ancient Mystery Cults*. Harvard University Press. p. 49. ISBN 0-674-03387-6.

Hopfe, Lewis M.; Richardson, Henry Neil (September 1994). "Archaeological indications on the origins of Roman Mithraism". In Hopfe, Lewis M. (ed.). *Uncovering Ancient Stones: Essays in memory of H. Neil Richardson*. Eisenbrauns. pp. 147–. ISBN 978-0-931464-73-7. Retrieved 19 March 2011. ... The Christian's view of this rival religion is extremely negative, because they regarded it as a demonic mockery of their

own faith.

Gordon, Richard. "FAQ". Archived from the original on 24 July 2011. Retrieved 22 March 2011. In general, in studying Mithras, and the other Greco-oriental mystery cults, it is good practice to steer clear of all information provided by Christian writers: they are not 'sources', they are violent apologists, and one does best not to believe a word they say, however tempting it is to supplement our ignorance with such stuff.

Bouyer, Louis (10 September 2004). *The Christian Mystery*. A&C Black. p. 70. ISBN 9780567043405. Retrieved 28 May 2011.

Graf, Fritz (2011). "Baptism and Graeco-Roman mystery cults". *Ablution, Initiation, and Baptism: Late antiquity, early Judaism, and early Christianity*. Walter de Gruyter. § Rituals of Purification, Rituals of Initiation, p 105.

Legge, Francis (1950). *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity: Being studies in religious history from 330 B.C.–330 A.D.* Retrieved 12 April 2011.

Renan, E. (1882). *Marc-Aurele et la fin du monde antique* [Marcus Aurelius and the End of the Antique World] (in French). Paris, FR. p. 579. On peut dire que, si le christianisme eût été arrêté dans sa croissance par quelque maladie mortelle, le monde eût été mithriaste.

Renan, Ernest (October 2004). *The Hibbert Lectures 1880: Lectures on the Influence of the Institutions, Thought and Culture of Rome on Christianity and the Development of the Catholic Church 1898*. Kessinger Publishing. pp. 35 ff. ISBN 978-1-4179-8242-4. Retrieved 22 March 2011.

Boyle, Leonard (1987). *A short guide to St. Clement's, Rome*. Rome, IT: Collegio San Clemente. p. 71.

Ezquerro, J.A. (2008). *Romanising Oriental Gods: Myth, salvation and ethics in the cults of Cybele, Isis and Mithras*. Translated by Gordon, R. Brill. pp. 202–203. ISBN 978-9004132931. Archived from the original on 4 May 2023. Retrieved 23 February 2023 – via Google Books.

North, J.D. (1988). *The Roman Cult of Mithras*. Routledge. ISBN 9780415929783.

Boyce, Mary (2001) [1979]. *Zoroastrians: Their religious beliefs and practices*. Routledge. p. 99. ISBN 978-0-415-23902-8. Retrieved 17 March 2011.

Vermaseren, M.J. (1965). *The Excavations in the Mithraeum of the Church of Santa Prisca in Rome*. Brill. p. 9. Retrieved 4 September 2011. This Mithraeum was discovered in 1934 ... they found a sanctuary of one of the most formidable antagonists of Christianity.

"Mithra". *Encyclopædia Britannica* (Online ed.). Archived from the original on 3 May 2015. Retrieved 9 April 2011. Mithra, also spelled Mithras, Sanskrit Mitra, ... In the 3rd and 4th centuries AD, the cult of Mithra, carried and supported by the soldiers of the Roman Empire, was the chief rival to the newly developing religion of Christianity.

Further reading

Athanassiadi, P. *A contribution to Mithraic Theology: The Emperor Julian's Hymn to King Helios*.

Mary Beard, John A. North, S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome: A history* Archived 4 May 2023 at the Wayback Machine.

Mary Beard, John A. North, S. R. F. Price, *Religions of Rome: A Sourcebook* Archived 4 May 2023 at the Wayback Machine.

Beck, Roger. The seat of Mithras at the equinoxes: Porphyry, *De Antro Nympharum* 241 (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 24 July 2011. Retrieved 31 March 2011.

Bianchi, Ugo, The history of religions Archived 26 March 2023 at the Wayback Machine.

Bivar, A. D. H., The personalities of Mithra in archaeology and literature

Bromiley, Geoffrey W., revised edition edited by Kyle, Melvin Grove, The international standard Bible encyclopedia Archived 26 March 2023 at the Wayback Machine

Clauss, Manfred (1992). *Cultores Mithrae. Die Anhängerschaft des Mithras-Kultes* [Cultores Mithrae. The followers of the Mithras cult]. *Heidelberger Althistorische Beiträge und Epigraphische Studien*, vol. 10. Stuttgart: Steiner, ISBN 3-515-06128-2.

Cumont, Franz (1894–1896). *Textes et monuments figurés relatifs aux Mystères de Mithra* : pub. avec une introduction critique – via Archive.org. Published in 2 volumes, and still of some value: Vol. 1 is an introduction. Vol. 2 is a collection of primary data.

Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques, *Etudes mithriaques: actes du 2e congrès international* Archived 4 May 2023 at the Wayback Machine. (Some portions are in English).

Gwynn, David M., Religious diversity in late antiquity.

Harris, J. R. "Mithras at Hermopolis and Memphis", in Donald M. Bailey (ed), *Archaeological Research in Roman Egypt* (2004). *Journal of Roman Archaeology*.

Hutton, Ronald, *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles: Their Nature and Legacy*.

Jitărel, Alin (2005). "Social Aspects of Mithraic Cult in Dacia" (PDF). *Analele Banatului, Seria Arheologie-Istorie (The Annals of Banat)* (in Romanian and English). Timișoara, Romania: Editura Grafite. ISSN 1221-678X. Archived from the original (PDF) on 10 February 2012.

Kaper, Olaf E., "Mithras im ptolemäischen Ägypten", in Peter C. Bol, Gabriele Kaminski, and Caterina Maderna (eds), *Fremdheit-Eigenheit: Ägypten, Griechenland und Rom : Austausch und Verständnis* (2004). Prestel.

Lane Fox, Robin, *Pagans and Christians*.

Malloch, D.K. (2006). *Christ and the Taurobolium - Lord Mithras in the Genesis of Christianity*. Scotland: Lochan. ISBN 9780954078614. Archived from the original on 14 April 2023. Retrieved 21 March 2023.

Marleen Martens, Guy De Boe, *Roman Mithraism*, (2004).

Mastrocinque, Attilio, *Studi sul mitraismo: il mitraismo e la magia*.

Mastrocinque, Attilio, *Des Mysteres de Mithra Aux Mysteres de Jesus*.

Mazhjo, Nina (2024). "Taking the Bull by His Horn: Augustus Slays the Mithraic Bull". *DABIR*. 10 (2): 61–77. doi:10.1163/29497833-20230003.

Méndez, Israel Campos. "In the Place of Mithras: Leadership in the Mithraic Mysteries" (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 22 July 2011.

Méndez, Israel Campos. "Elementos de continuidad entre el culto del dios Mithra en Oriente y Occidente" [Elements of continuity between the worship of the god Mithra in East and West]. Archived from the original on 4 October 2020. Retrieved 11 June 2011 – via Google Translate.

Meyer, Marvin (1987). *The Ancient Mysteries: A sourcebook of sacred texts*. University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 9780812216929 – via Google Books.

Moga, Iulian, *Mithra în asia mică și în regiunile limitrofe. Mirajul originilor*. [Mithra in Asia Minor and in regions close].

Nicholson, Oliver, The end of Mithraism, *Antiquity*, Volume: 69 Number: 263 Page: 358–362.

Nilsson, Martin P., *Geschichte der griechischen Religion*, Volume 2.

Roll, Israel, The mysteries of Mithras in the Roman Orient: the problem of origin.

Romero Mayorga, Claudina (2017). "Music and Theatrical Performance in the Mysteries of Mithras". *Music in Art: International Journal for Music Iconography*. 42 (1–2): 33–45. ISSN 1522-7464.

Sauer, Eberhard, The end of paganism in the north-western provinces of the Roman Empire: The example of the Mithras cult Archived 14 April 2023 at the Wayback Machine.

Turcan, Robert (2000). *Mithra et le mithriacisme*. Paris.

Turcan, Robert, The Gods of Ancient Rome: Religion in everyday life from archaic to imperial Archived 26 March 2023 at the Wayback Machine.

Turcan, Robert, Note sur la liturgie mithriaque Archived 30 November 2011 at the Wayback Machine [Note on the Mithraic Liturgy].

Ulansey, David. The Mithraic lion-headed figure and the Platonic world-soul. Archived from the original on 7 June 2011. Retrieved 28 May 2011.

Ulansey, David. Mithras and the hypercosmic sun (PDF). Archived from the original (PDF) on 22 June 2013.

Walsh, David (2018). *The Cult of Mithras in Late Antiquity: Development, Decline and Demise ca. A.D. 270-430*. Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-38080-6.

Walters, Vivienne J., *The cult of Mithras in the Roman provinces of Gaul* Archived 4 May 2023 at the Wayback Machine, Brill

Will, Ernest, *Le relief cultuel gréco-romain*, (1955).

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Mithraism.

Wikisource has the text of the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica article "Mithras".

"Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies". Archived from the original on 17 May 2011.

Retrieved 28 March 2011. The Electronic Journal of Mithraic Studies (EJMS) is a revival of the Journal of Mithraic Studies edited by Dr. Richard Gordon. It is a place where researchers on Roman Mithraism can publish the product of their research and make it freely available for other interested people.

Ostia Antica Mithraeum at the Baths of Mithras Archived 9 August 2016 at the Wayback Machine. (YouTube video)

Mithraeum Archived 14 November 2022 at the Wayback Machine A website with a collection of monuments and bibliography about Mithraism.

Cumont, "The Mysteries Of Mithra" Archived 2 May 2017 at the Wayback Machine

Google Maps: Map of the locations of Mithraea

Archaeology magazine Archived 20 December 2012 at the Wayback Machine A publication of the Archaeological Institute of America

A list of Mithraea

Article on Franz Cumont Archived 17 May 2017 at the Wayback Machine

Ostia Mithraea Archived 3 May 2017 at the Wayback Machine

Literary sources Archived 17 May 2017 at the Wayback Machine

A gallery of monuments and inscriptions Archived 27 September 2017 at the Wayback Machine

Cult of Mithras Explained Archived 15 October 2022 at the Wayback Machine (YouTube video - with references)

vte

Ancient Roman religion and mythology

vte

History of religions

vte

Mithraism

vte

Religion

vte

Paganism (and modern paganism)

Authority control databases: National Edit this at Wikidata

JapanCzech RepublicSpainIsrael

Categories: MithraismChristianity in the Roman EmpirePersecution of pagans in the late Roman EmpireRoman–Iranian relationsSolar gods

This page was last edited on 23 November 2025, at 22:46 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

Skip to main contentAccessibility help

Accessibility feedback

Seasonal Holidays 2025

marcian bible

AI Mode

All

Images

Videos

Shopping

Short videos

Books

More

Tools

Including results for marcion bible

Search only for marcian bible

AI Overview

The "Marcian bible" refers to the scripture collection compiled by the early Christian teacher Marcion of Sinope in the 2nd century CE, which was likely the first attempt to create a definitive Christian canon. It consisted of an abridged version of the Gospel of Luke and ten of Paul's epistles, with all other books, including the entire Hebrew Bible, rejected. This canon was central to his theology, which argued the God of the Old Testament was a lesser, wrathful deity, distinct from the benevolent God of Jesus revealed in the Gospels.

Structure and content

The Gospel: Marcion's version was a significantly altered form of the Gospel of Luke, which he called "the Gospel of the Lord". It began with Jesus's descent into Capernaum and omitted verses he saw as Jewish influences, such as Jesus's birth narrative and his references to the creator God.

Pauline epistles: His canon also included ten of the apostle Paul's letters. Marcion removed passages from Paul's writings that he believed connected to the Jewish God or the Old Testament.

Rejection of the Old Testament: A core tenet of his belief was that the God of the Old Testament (the creator deity, or Demiurge) was a different, inferior god to the loving Father revealed by Jesus. As such, he rejected the Hebrew Bible entirely and did not include it in his canon.

Impact and legacy

Prompted other canons: Marcion's effort is widely seen as the catalyst for other Christian groups to compile their own authoritative canons in response.

Rejection by orthodoxy: His views were deemed heretical by the emerging orthodox church, and he was excommunicated. His canon was a major point of contention and was rejected by those who affirmed the unity of the God of the Old and New Testaments.

Marcionism - Wikipedia

Marcion preached that the benevolent God of the Gospel who sent Jesus into the world as the savior was the true Supreme Being, dif...

Wikipedia

Gospel of Marcion - Wikipedia

The Gospel of Marcion, called by its adherents the Gospel of the Lord, or more commonly the Gospel (Evangelion), was a text used b...

Wikipedia

How Scholars Are Reconstructing the Lost Gospel of Marcion

Marcian compiled his own collection of scriptures, which drew significant criticism for allegedly mutilating the Gospel of Luke an...

YouTube

Show all
Show more
Marcionism

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Marcionism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcionism)

The premise of Marcionism is that the ministry of Jesus is incompatible with the actions of God in the Old Testament.

People also ask

Who was Marcian in the Bible?

Did Marcion believe Jesus was God?

Who was Marian in the Bible?

Do Rosicrucians believe Jesus is God?

Feedback

Marcion and Getting Unhitched from the Old Testament

The Gospel Coalition

[https://www.thegospelcoalition.org › kevin-deyoung](https://www.thegospelcoalition.org/kevin-deyoung)

May 11, 2018 — Marcion, the son of a bishop, was an intelligent, capable, hard, unbending, vain, rich, ambitious man. He made his way to Rome sometime between ...

Marcion (and Marcionism): The Untold Story of ... - Bart Ehrman

bartehrman.com

[https://www.bartehrman.com › Blog](https://www.bartehrman.com/blog)

Jun 27, 2024 — Marcion believed that the God of Jesus was a God of mercy and love. the first known canon of Scripture devised by an early Christian. This ...

Marcion of Sinope

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Marcion_of_Sinope](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Marcion_of_Sinope)

Marcion of Sinope was a theologian in early Christianity. Marcion preached that God had sent Jesus Christ, who was distinct from the "vengeful" God ...

What is Marcionism?

GotQuestions.org

[https://www.gotquestions.org › marcionism](https://www.gotquestions.org/marcionism)

Jan 4, 2022 — Marcionism was a religious movement based on the teachings of the 2nd-century heretic Marcion of Sinope.

Videos

Meet Marcion: The First Great Christian Heretic

YouTube · Bart D. Ehrman

1 month ago

YouTube · Bart D. Ehrman

42:44

What Did Marcion Believe?

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

Jan 26, 2016

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

7:38

Marcion, a 2nd-century Christian teacher, developed a two-god theology and a unique New Testament canon, influencing early Christianity.

"Marcion, Heresy, and the Invention of the Christian Bible ...

YouTube · The Congregation at Duke Chapel

Nov 8, 2022

YouTube · The Congregation at Duke Chapel

1:03:40

10 key moments in this video

How Scholars Are Reconstructing the Lost Gospel of Marcion

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

Feb 6, 2025

YouTube · ReligionForBreakfast

24:13

Marcion, an early Christian leader, created a shorter version of the New Testament that scholars are now reconstructing.

Feedback

View all

The Heresies of Marcion

Online Bible Institute

<https://onlinebibleinstitute.org> › the-heresies-of-marcion

Aug 30, 2023 — Marcion was born in Sinope, Pontus, around the first decade of the 2nd century. He was a shipowner and likely prosperous.

Marcion, the Canon, the Law, and the Historical Jesus

Early Christian Writings

<https://www.earlychristianwritings.com> › marcion-layman

Marcion was actually born into a Christian family. His father was a Christian bishop. He was born in Sinope, Asia Minor in about 85 CE.

The Two Gods of Marcion and the Forgeries in the Name ...

The Bart Ehrman Blog

<https://ehrmanblog.org> › the-two-gods-of-marcion-and-...

Mar 5, 2024 — Marcion argued that the God of the Old Testament was the Jewish God who created this world, chose Israel to be his people, and then gave them his law.

People also search for

Marcion Bible PDF

Marcionism today
Why is Marcionism wrong
Marcionism and Gnosticism
Marcion first Bible
Marcion of Sinope
Marcion meaning
Marcionite Church

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Marcionism

Marcion of Sinope - Wikipedia

The Marcion Heresy - YouTube

The Heresies of Marcion | Online Bible Institute

Marcionism - Wikipedia

Marcionism was an early Christian dualistic belief system originating with the teachings of Marcion of Sinope in Rome around 144. Marcion was an early Christian theologian, evangelist, and an important figure in early Christianity. He was the son of a bishop of Sinope in Pontus.

Source:

Wikipedia

Founder: Marcion of Sinope

Founded: 144 AD, Rome, Italy

Scripture: Gospel of Marcion (modified Gospel of Luke); Ten Pauline epistles

People also search for

Montanism

Simonians

Carpocratians

Borborites

Feedback

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address
- Update location
[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)
[Create account](#)
[Log in](#)

Marcionism

[Article](#)
[Talk](#)
[Read](#)
[Edit](#)
[View history](#)

[Tools](#)
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Marcionism

Marcion teaching (Mart Sander, 2014)
Type Early Christian dualistic theology
Scripture
Gospel of Marcion (modified Gospel of Luke)
Ten Pauline epistles
Theology
Dualistic theology
Jesus as spiritual savior sent by benevolent Supreme God
Creator deity (Demiurge) as separate malevolent god
Docetic Christology
Associations Early Christianity
Gnosticism (disputed)
Founder Marcion of Sinope
Origin c. 144 CE
Rome
Branched from Early Christian church
Defunct Survived until at least 3rd-4th centuries CE
Part of a series on the
History of
Christian theology
Malmesbury Abbey's 1407 Bible from Belgium
Background
Christian theologyDiversity in early Christian theology

AdoptionismArianismDocetismGnosticismMarcionismMontanismEarly ChristianityProto-orthodox ChristianityTimelineHistory of Christianity Template:History of ChristianityEcclesiastical polityTrinitarianismNontrinitarianismChristologyPaterologyPneumatologyMariologyBiblical canonDeuterocanonHermeneuticsTheological hermeneutics African AmericanAsian AmericanPhilosophical theologyChristian philosophyChristian apologeticsPersecution and toleranceHistorical theology Ecumenical Creeds Patristics and Councils Post-Nicene development Reformation From the Reformation to the World Wars Since the World Wars Contextualisation and Inculturation Fourth Great Awakening icon Christianity portal vte

Not to be confused with Marcianists.

Marcionism was an early Christian dualistic belief system originating with the teachings of Marcion of Sinope in Rome around 144.[1] Marcion was an early Christian theologian, [2] evangelist,[2] and an important figure in early Christianity.[2][3] He was the son of a bishop of Sinope in Pontus. About the middle of the 2nd century (140–155) he traveled to Rome, where he joined the Syrian gnostic Cerdo.[4]

Marcion preached that the benevolent God of the Gospel who sent Jesus into the world as the savior was the true Supreme Being, different and opposed to the malevolent deity, the Demiurge or creator deity, identified with Yahweh in the Hebrew Bible.[2][3][5] He considered himself a follower of Paul the Apostle, whom he believed to have been the only true apostle of Jesus.[2][3]

Marcion's canon, possibly the first Christian biblical canon ever compiled, consisted of eleven books: the Gospel of Marcion, which was a shorter version of the Gospel of Luke, and ten Pauline epistles.[2][3][6] Marcion's canon rejected the entire Old Testament, along with all other epistles and gospels of what would become the 27-book canon of the New Testament, which during his life had yet to be compiled.[2][3][7][8]

Marcionism was denounced by its opponents as heresy and written against by the Church Fathers – notably by Tertullian in his five-book treatise *Adversus Marcionem* (Against Marcion), in about 208.[2][3] Marcion's writings are lost, though they were widely read and numerous manuscripts must have existed.[2][3] Even so, many scholars say it is possible to reconstruct and deduce a large part of ancient Marcionism through what later critics, especially Tertullian, said concerning Marcion.[2][3][9]

History

Main article: Marcion of Sinope

According to Tertullian and other writers of early proto-orthodox Christianity, the movement known as Marcionism began with the teachings and excommunication of Marcion around 144. Marcion was reportedly a wealthy shipowner, the son of a bishop of Sinope of Pontus, Anatolia. He arrived in Rome c. 140, soon after the Bar Kokhba revolt. The organization continued for some centuries later outside the Byzantine Empire in areas which later would be dominated by Manichaeism, particularly as the Sasanian Empire.[citation needed]

Schism within Marcionism

By the reign of emperor Commodus (180–192), Marcionism was divided into various opinions with various leaders; among whom was Apelles, whom Rhodo describes as "priding himself on his manner of life and his age, acknowledges one principle, but says that the prophecies are from an opposing principle, being led to this view by the responses of a maiden by name Philumene, who was possessed by a demon". However, "others, among whom were Potitus and Basilicus, held to two principles, as did Marcion himself. Others consider that there are not only two, but three natures. Of these, Syneros was the leader and chief." [10]

In the early 3rd century, a splinter group of Marcionites was established by Prepon the Syrian, who claimed the existence of an intermediate spiritual entity between the good and evil gods.[11]

Teachings

Marcion of Sinope depicted with the Apostle John

The premise of Marcionism is that the ministry of Jesus is incompatible with the actions of God in the Old Testament. Focusing on the Pauline traditions, Marcion felt that all other conceptions of the Gospel, and especially any association with Israelite religion, was opposed to, and a backsliding from, the truth. He further regarded the arguments of Paul regarding Law and Gospel, wrath and grace, works and faith, flesh and spirit, sin and righteousness, death and life, as the essence of religious truth. He ascribed these aspects and characteristics as two principles, the righteous and wrathful God of the Old Testament, who is at the same time identical with the creator of the world, and a second God of the Gospel who is only love and mercy.[12]

Marcionites held that the God of the Hebrew Bible was inconsistent, jealous, wrathful and genocidal, and that the material world he created was defective, a place of suffering; the God who made such a world is a bungling or malicious demiurge.

In the God of the [Old Testament] he saw a being whose character was stern justice, and therefore anger, contentiousness and unmercifulness. The law which rules nature and man appeared to him to accord with the characteristics of this God and the kind of law revealed by him, and this God is the creator and lord of the world (κοσμοκράτωρ [English transliteration: kosmokrator/cosmocrator]). As the law which governs the world is inflexible and yet, on the other hand, full of contradictions, just and again brutal, and

as the law of the Old Testament exhibits the same features, so the God of creation was to Marcion a being who united in himself the whole gradations of attributes from justice to malevolence, from obstinacy to inconsistency." [13]

In Marcionite belief, Jesus was not a Jewish Messiah, but a spiritual entity that was sent by the Monad to reveal the truth about existence, thus allowing humanity to escape the earthly trap of the demiurge. Marcion called God 'the Stranger God', or 'the Alien God' in some translations, as this deity had not had any previous interactions with the world, and was wholly unknown. See also the Unknown God of Hellenism and the Areopagus sermon.

Various popular sources count Marcion among the Gnostics. The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church (3rd ed.) puts it, "it is clear that he would have had little sympathy with their mythological speculations" (p. 1034). In 1911 Henry Wace stated:

A modern divine would turn away from the dreams of Valentinianism in silent contempt; but he could not refuse to discuss the question raised by Marcion, whether there is such opposition between different parts of what he regards as the word of God, that all cannot come from the same author.

A primary difference between Marcionites and Gnostics was that the Gnostics based their theology on secret wisdom (as, for example, Valentinus who claimed to receive the secret wisdom from Theudas who received it directly from Paul) of which they claimed to be in possession. In contrast, Marcion based his theology on the contents of the Letters of Paul and the recorded sayings of Jesus—in other words, an argument from scripture, with Marcion defining what was and was not scripture. Also, the Christology of the Marcionites is thought to have been primarily Docetic, denying the human nature of Jesus. This may have been due to the Marcionites' unwillingness to believe that Jesus was the son of both God the Father and the demiurge. Scholars of Early Christianity disagree on whether to classify Marcion as a Gnostic: Adolf von Harnack does not classify Marcion as a Gnostic, [14] whereas G. R. S. Mead does. [15] Harnack argued that Marcion was not a Gnostic in the strict sense because Marcion rejected elaborate creation myths, and did not claim to have special revelation or secret knowledge. Mead claimed Marcionism makes certain points of contact with Gnosticism in its view that the creator of the material world is not the true deity, rejection of materialism and affirmation of a transcendent, purely good spiritual realm in opposition to the evil physical realm, the belief the "True" God sent Jesus to save humanity, the central role of Jesus in revealing the requirements of salvation, the belief Paul had a special place in the transmission of this "wisdom", and its docetism. According to the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica article on Marcion: [16]

It was no mere school for the learned, disclosed no mysteries for the privileged, but sought to lay the foundation of the Christian community on the pure gospel, the authentic institutes of Christ. The pure gospel, however, Marcion found to be everywhere more or less corrupted and mutilated in the Christian circles of his time. His undertaking

thus resolved itself into a reformation of Christendom. This reformation was to deliver Christendom from false Jewish doctrines by restoring the Pauline conception of the gospel, Paul being, according to Marcion, the only apostle who had rightly understood the new message of salvation as delivered by Christ. In Marcion's own view, therefore, the founding of his church—to which he was first driven by opposition—amounts to a reformation of Christendom through a return to the gospel of Christ and to Paul; nothing was to be accepted beyond that. This of itself shows that it is a mistake to reckon Marcion among the Gnostics. A dualist he certainly was, but he was not a Gnostic.

Marcionism shows the influence of Hellenistic philosophy on Christianity and presents a moral critique of the Old Testament from the standpoint of Platonism. According to Harnack, the sect may have led other Christians to introduce a formal statement of beliefs into their liturgy (see Creed) and to formulate a canon of authoritative Scripture of their own, thus eventually producing the current canon of the New Testament.

As for the main question, however, whether he knew of, or assumes the existence of, a written New Testament of the Church in any sense whatever, in this case an affirmatory answer is most improbable, because if this were so he would have been compelled to make a direct attack upon the New Testament of the Church, and if such an attack had been made we should have heard of it from Tertullian. Marcion, on the contrary, treats the Catholic Church as one that 'follows the Testament of the Creator-God,' and directs the full force of his attack against this Testament and against the falsification of the Gospel and of the Pauline Epistles. His polemic would necessarily have been much less simple if he had been opposed to a Church which, by possessing a New Testament side by side with the Old Testament, had ipso facto placed the latter under the shelter of the former. In fact Marcion's position towards the Catholic Church is intelligible, in the full force of its simplicity, only under the supposition that the Church had not yet in her hand any 'litera scripta Novi Testamenti.'^[17]

Marcion is believed to have imposed a severe morality on his followers, some of whom suffered in the persecution. In particular, he refused to re-admit those who recanted their faith under Roman persecution; see also lapsi.

Marcionite canon

See also: Development of the New Testament canon § Marcion of Sinope

Marcion teaching. Mart Sander (mixed media, 2014)

Tertullian claimed Marcion was the first to separate the New Testament from the Old Testament.^[18] Marcion is said to have gathered scriptures from Jewish tradition, and juxtaposed these against the sayings and teachings of Jesus in a work entitled the Antithesis.^[19] Besides the Antithesis, the Testament of the Marcionites was also composed of a Gospel of Christ which was Marcion's version of Luke, and that the Marcionites attributed to Paul, that was different in a number of ways from the version that is now regarded as canonical.^[20] It seems to have lacked all prophecies of Christ's coming, as well as the Infancy account, the baptism, and the verses were more terse in

general. It also included ten of the Pauline epistles, in the following order: Galatians, 1 Corinthians, 2 Corinthians, Romans, 1 Thessalonians, 2 Thessalonians, Laodiceans, Colossians, Philemon, Philippians.[21]

Marcion of Sinope

Marcion's Apostolikon did not include the Pastoral epistles or the Epistle to the Hebrews. According to the Muratorian canon, it included a Marcionite pseudo-Paul's epistle to the Alexandrians and an epistle to the Laodiceans.[22] The contents of this Marcionite Epistle to the Laodiceans are unknown. Some scholars equate it with the Epistle to the Ephesians, because the latter originally did not contain the words 'in Ephesus', and because it is the only non-pastoral Pauline epistle missing from the Marcionite canon, suggesting Laodiceans was simply Ephesians under another name.[23] The Epistle to the Alexandrians is not known from any other source; Marcion himself appears to have never mentioned it.

In bringing together these texts, Marcion redacted what is perhaps the first New Testament canon on record, which he called the Gospel and the Apostolikon, which reflects his belief in the writings of Jesus and the apostle Paul respectively. An English language reconstruction of the content of the Evangelion and Apostolikon attested in Patristic sources was published by Jason David BeDuhn in 2013.[24]

The Prologues to the Pauline Epistles (which are not a part of the text, but short introductory sentences as one might find in modern study Bibles[25]), found in several older Latin codices, are now widely believed to have been written by Marcion or one of his followers. Harnack makes the following claim:[26]

We have indeed long known that Marcionite readings found their way into the ecclesiastical text of the Pauline Epistles, but now for seven years we have known that Churches actually accepted the Marcionite prefaces to the Pauline Epistles! De Bruyne has made one of the finest discoveries of later days in proving that those prefaces, which we read first in Codex Fuldensis and then in numbers of later manuscripts, are Marcionite, and that the Churches had not noticed the cloven hoof.

Conversely, several early Latin codices contain Anti-Marcionite Prologues to the Gospels.

Comparison

Marcionite canon

(c. 130–140) Modern canon

(c. 4th century)

Section	Books	Section	Books
---------	-------	---------	-------

Evangelikon			
-------------	--	--	--

Gospel of Marcion			
-------------------	--	--	--

(close resemblance)			
---------------------	--	--	--

to Gospel of Luke)
Gospels
(Euangelia)
Gospel of Matthew
Gospel of Mark
Gospel of Luke
Gospel of John
(nonexistent) (none) Acts
Acts of the Apostles
Apostolikon
Galatians
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Romans
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
Laodiceans¹
Colossians
Philippians
Philemon
Pauline epistles
Romans
1 Corinthians
2 Corinthians
Galatians
Ephesians
Philippians
Colossians
1 Thessalonians
2 Thessalonians
1 Timothy
2 Timothy
Titus
Philemon
Hebrews
(nonexistent) (none) Catholic epistles
James
1 Peter
2 Peter
1 John
2 John
3 John
Jude
(nonexistent) (none) Apocalypses
Apocalypse of John

1. Contents unknown; some scholars equate it with Ephesians.

Reaction to Marcion by early Christians

According to a remark by Origen (Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew 15.3), Marcion "prohibited allegorical interpretations of the scripture". Tertullian disputed this in his treatise against Marcion.[citation needed]

Tertullian, along with Epiphanius of Salamis, also charged that Marcion set aside the gospels of Matthew, Mark and John, and used Luke alone. Tertullian cited Luke 6:43–45 ("a good tree does not produce bad fruit")[27] and Luke 5:36–38 ("nobody tears a piece from a new garment to patch an old garment or puts new wine in old wineskins"),[28] in theorizing that Marcion set about to recover the authentic teachings of Jesus. Irenaeus claimed,

[Marcion's] salvation will be the attainment only of those souls which had learned his doctrine; while the body, as having been taken from the earth, is incapable of sharing in salvation.[29]

Tertullian also attacked this view in *De Carne Christi*. [citation needed]

Polycarp, according to Irenaeus in his work, *Adversus Haereses*, had an encounter with Marcion:

And Polycarp himself replied to Marcion, who met him on one occasion, and said, "Dost thou know me?" "I do know thee, the first-born of Satan."

Hippolytus reported that Marcion's phantasmal (and Docetist) Christ was "revealed as a man, though not a man", and did not really die on the cross.[30] However, Ernest Evans, in editing this work, observes:

This may not have been Marcion's own belief. It was certainly that of Hermogenes (cf. Tertullian, *Adversus Hermogenem*) and probably other gnostics and Marcionites, who held that the intractability of this matter explains the world's many imperfections.[page needed]

Islamic accounts

The Arabic name for Marcionism, *marqiyūniyya*, is attested to by several historical sources of the Islamic Golden Age which appear to reveal that a meager Marcionite community continued to exist in the Near East into the tenth century. For example, the Thomas of Margā, abbot of the Eastern Syriac monastery of Beth ʿAvē, states that, at the end of the eighth century, the metropolitan bishop of Gēlān and Daylam, Šubḥālīšoʿ, travelled into the remote parts of his see, preaching "among the pagans, Marcionites and Manichaeans." [31] In a similar way, the tenth-century Muslim bibliographer Ibn al-Nadīm goes so far as to claim that the Marcionites are "numerous in Khurāsān" and that there "they practice openly, like the Manichaeans." [32] Although information about the Khorasanite Marcionites is not related in any other historical source, Ibn al-Nadīm

nevertheless also quotes a "reliable informant" (thiqa), "whom he says had seen Marcionite books and who reported that their script resembled that of the Manichaeans." [33][34]

Those medieval Muslim writers who specialized in the study of foreign religions often presented Marcionite theology accurately. For example, al-Mas'ūdī (d. 956) states that the Marcionites taught "two principles, good and evil, and justice is a third (principle) between the two," [35] which, according to de Blois, are explicit references to the Marcionite belief in "the good god, evil matter, and the just god." [34] In the majority of cases, the Islamic references to Marcionism are references to what has been termed "Neo-Marcionism," a sub-branch of the sect that seems to have lived in Khorasan in the tenth century. [34] The classical Muslim thinkers rejected all types of Marcionite theology as deviations from the truth, and some thinkers, such as Ibn al-Malāḥimī (d. c. 1050) wrote polemics against them as others did against Nicene Christianity. [34] This did not, however, prevent many of the same thinkers from studying the Marcionites from an anthropological or sociological point of view, as is evident from Ibn al-Malāḥimī's extended reference to the customs of the Marcionites. [34]

Further scholarship

In *Lost Christianities*, Bart Ehrman contrasts the Marcionites with the Ebionites as polar ends of a spectrum with regard to the Old Testament. [36] Ehrman acknowledges that many of Marcion's ideas are very close to what is currently known as "Gnosticism", especially his rejection of the Jewish God, his rejection of the Old Testament, and his rejection of the material world, and his elevation of Paul as the primary apostle. There were early Christian groups, such as the Ebionites, which did not accept Paul's writings as a part of their canon. Ehrman asserts that Marcion likely "hated Jews and everything Jewish". [37] This claim, however, is unsupported by other contemporary historians.

Robert M. Price considers the Pauline canon a single collection of epistles despite the problem which is caused by a lack of knowledge as to how they were collected, when they were collected, who collected them and sent copies of them to the various churches. [38] Price has investigated several historical scenarios and reached the conclusion that Marcion was the first person in recorded history who is known to have collected Paul's writings and sent copies of them to various churches together as a canon. He summarizes,

But the first collector of the Pauline Epistles had been Marcion. No one else we know of would be a good candidate, certainly not the essentially fictive Luke, Timothy, and Onesimus. And Marcion, as Burkitt and Bauer show, fills the bill perfectly. [39]

David Trobisch argues that the evidence which is revealed by comparison of the oldest manuscripts of Paul's letters proves that several epistles had previously been assembled as an anthology which was published separate from the New Testament, and as a whole, this anthology was then incorporated into the New Testament. Trobisch also argues that Paul was the assembler of his own letters for publication. [40]

See also

Antinomianism

Antitactae

Borborites

Catharism

Christianity in the ante-Nicene period

Gnosticism

List of Gnostic sects

Manichaeism

Positive Christianity

Marcion hypothesis

References

115 years and 6 months from the Crucifixion of Jesus, according to Tertullian's reckoning in *Adversus Marcionem*, XV.

Ehrman, Bart D. (2005) [2003]. "At Polar Ends of the Spectrum: Early Christian Ebionites and Marcionites". *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 95–112.

doi:10.1017/s0009640700110273. ISBN 978-0-19-518249-1. LCCN 2003053097. S2CID 152458823.

Dunn, James D. G. (2016). ""The Apostle of the Heretics": Paul, Valentinus, and Marcion". In Porter, Stanley E.; Yoon, David (eds.). *Paul and Gnosis*. *Pauline Studies*. Vol. 9. Leiden and Boston: Brill Publishers. pp. 105–118.

doi:10.1163/9789004316690_008. ISBN 978-90-04-31668-3. LCCN 2016009435. S2CID 171394481.

History of the Christian Church, Volume II: Ante-Nicene Christianity. A.D. 100–325.

Marcion and his School by PHILIP SCHAFF [1]

BeDuhn, Jason (2015). "The New Marcion" (PDF). *Forum*. 3 (Fall 2015): 165. Archived from the original (PDF) on 2019-05-25. Retrieved 2023-12-23.

Ehrman, Bart D. (2005). *Misquoting Jesus: The Story Behind Who Changed the Bible and Why*. New York: HarperOne. p. 33. ISBN 978-0-06-085951-0.

"Eusebius' Church History". *Ccel.org*. 2005-06-01. Retrieved 2013-01-25.

Ehrman, Bart D. *Misquoting Jesus*. pp. 33–34.

Ehrman, Bart D. *Misquoting Jesus*. p. 163.

Eusebius of Caesarea, *Ecclesiastical History*, Book v. Chapter xiii.

Hippolytus, *Refutation of all Heresies*, book 7, ch. 19

Adolf von Harnack, *History of Dogma*, vol. 1, ch. 5, p. 269

Harnack, *idem.*, p.271

Article on Adolf von Harnack

G. R. S. Mead, *Fragments of a Faith Forgotten: Some Short Sketches among the Gnostics of the First Two Centuries* (London, 1906), p. 246.

von Harnack, Adolf (1911). "Marcion" . In Chisholm, Hugh (ed.). *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 17 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 191–693.

Harnack, *Origin of the New Testament*, appendix 6, pp. 222–23

McDonald & Sanders, editors, *The Canon Debate*, 2002, chapter 18 by Everett

Ferguson, page 310, quoting Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum* 30: "Since Marcion separated the New Testament from the Old, he is necessarily subsequent to that which he separated, inasmuch as it was only in his power to separate what was previously united. Having been united previous to its separation, the fact of its subsequent separation proves the subsequence also of the man who effected the separation." Page 308, note 61 adds: "[Wolfram] Kinzig suggests that it was Marcion who usually called his Bible *testamentum* [Latin for testament]."

Gnostic Society Library presentation of Marcion's Antithesis

Marcionite Research Library presentation of The Gospel of Marcion

"The Very First Bible". theveryfirstbible.org. Retrieved 2021-11-04.

Mead 1931.

Adrian Cozad. "Book Seven of the Apostolicon: The Epistle of the Apostle Paul To the Laodiceans" (PDF). Marcionite Research Library. Melissa Cutler. Retrieved 6 July 2018.

BeDuhn, Jason (2013). *The First New Testament: Marcion's Scriptural Canon*.

Polebridge Press. ISBN 978-1-59815-131-2.

"Origin of the New Testament – Christian Classics Ethereal Library". Ccel.org. 2005-07-22. Retrieved 2012-07-31.

"Origin of the New Testament – Christian Classics Ethereal Library". Ccel.org. 2005-07-22. Retrieved 2012-07-31.

Ernest Evans (2001-12-08). "Tertullian "Against Marcion" 1.2". Tertullian.org. Retrieved 2013-01-25.

Tertullian (2002-06-22). ""Against Marcion" 4.11.9". Translated by Ernest Evans.

Tertullian.org. Retrieved 2013-01-25.

Against Heresies, 1.27.3

Tertullian *Adversus Marcionem* ("Against Marcion"), translated and edited by Ernest Evans

Thomas of Margā, *Book of Governors*, Syriac text, ed. Budge, London 1893, p. 261

Fihrist, ed. Taḏjaddud, p. 402

Fihrist, ed. Taḏjaddud, p. 19

de Blois, F.C., "Marḳiyūniyya", in: *Encyclopaedia of Islam*, Second Edition, Edited by: P. Bearman, Th. Bianquis, C.E. Bosworth, E. van Donzel, W.P. Heinrichs.

al-Mas'ūdī, *Tanbīh*, 127

Interview by Deborah Caldwell (2011-02-17). "Interview with Bart Ehrman about Lost Christianities". Beliefnet.com. Retrieved 2013-01-25.

Ehrman, Bart D. (2003). *Lost Christianities: The Battles for Scripture and the Faiths We Never Knew*. United States: Oxford University Press. pp. 103, 111. ISBN 978-0-19-514183-2.

"The Evolution of the Pauline Canon by Robert Price". Depts.drew.edu. Archived from the original on 2013-01-14. Retrieved 2013-01-25.

Price, Robert (2012). *The Amazing Colossal Apostle*. Signature Books. ISBN 978-1-56085-216-2.[page needed]

Trobisch, David (2001). *Paul's Letter Collection*. Quiet Water Publications. ISBN 978-0-96639667-6.[page needed]

Further reading

Baker, David L., *Two Testaments, One Bible* (second edn; Leicester: Inter-Varsity, 1991):

pp. 35, 48–52.

Legge, Francis, *Forerunners and Rivals of Christianity, From 330 B.C. to 330 A.D.* (1914), reprinted in two volumes bound as one, University Books New York, 1964. LC Catalog 64-24125.

McGowan, Andrew Brian (2001). "Marcion's Love of Creation". *Journal of Early Christian Studies*. 9 (3): 295–311. doi:10.1353/earl.2001.0045. S2CID 170522717.

Mead, G.R.S., *Gospel of Marcion Fragments of a Faith Forgotten*, London and Benares, 1900; 3rd Edition 1931.

Price, Robert M. *The Evolution of the Pauline Canon*.

Riparelli, Enrico, *Il volto del Cristo dualista. Da Marcione ai catari*, Peter Lang, Bern – Berlin – Bruxelles – Frankfurt am Main – New York – Oxford – Wien 2008, 368 pp. ISBN 978-3-03911-490-0

Rist, Martin (1942). "Pseudepigraphic Refutations of Marcionism". *The Journal of Religion*. 22 (1): 39–62. doi:10.1086/482828. S2CID 171058612.

Pollock, Benjamin (2012). "On the Road to Marcionism: Franz Rosenzweig's Early Theology". *Jewish Quarterly Review*. 102 (2): 224–55. doi:10.1353/jqr.2012.0020. S2CID 170094655.

Merquior, J. G (1988). "From Marcionism to Marxism". *Critical Review*. 2 (4): 101–13. doi:10.1080/08913818808459542.

Sciglitano, Anthony Charles (2003). *Hans Urs von Balthasar's theology of Judaism: Trinitarian anti -Marcionism and the surprising nature of grace*. ETD Collection for Fordham University. pp. 1–230.

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Marcion.

von Harnack, Adolf (1911). "Marcion" . *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Vol. 17 (11th ed.). pp. 691–693.

The Marcionite Research Library

Herbermann, Charles, ed. (1913). "Marcionites" . *Catholic Encyclopedia*. New York: Robert Appleton Company.

vte

History of Christianity

SpreadHistory of theologyHistoricity of the BibleList of martyrs

Timeline

Centuries

1st2nd and 3rd4th5th6th7th8th9th10th11th12th13th14th15th16th17th18th19th20th21st

Early

Christianity

Origins and

Apostolic Age

BackgroundChronology of Jesus birthbaptismministrycrucifixionresurrectionGreat

Commissionascensionhistorical JesusHoly SpiritApostles in the New TestamentJewish

Christianity SplitPaul the ApostleCouncil of Jerusalem GospelsActsPauline

epistlesGeneral epistlesRevelation

Ante-Nicene

period

Diversity

AdoptionismArianismDocetismDonatismGnosticismMarcionismMontanismCanon

developmentPersecutionApostolic / Church Fathers Clement of

RomePolycarplgnatiusIrenaeusJustin MartyrTertullianOrigenGreat ChurchEarly

AfricanThomasines

Late antiquity

Constantine Constantinian shiftRoman state religionMonasticismCouncilsNicaea I

CreedChristianityAthanasiusJeromeAugustineConstantinople IEphesus IChalcedon

Chalcedonian / Non-ChalcedonianBiblical canon

Catholicism

(Timeline)

Papacy Development of primacyEastern Orthodox oppositionPeace and Truce of

GodCrusading movementLateran IVArt patronage of Julius IILeo XCounter-Reformation

TrentArtCatholic ReformationJesuits XavierThomas MoreMonastery

dissolutionWarsMass rocks and priest holesGuadalupeJansenistsMolinistsNeo-

ScholasticismTeresaModernismIndependent CatholicsVatican I and Vatican II Ecclesial
community

Eastern

Christianity

Eastern OrthodoxyOriental OrthodoxyChurch of the EastChrysostomNestorianismIcons

IconodulismIconoclasmGreat SchismFall of

ConstantinopleArmeniaGeorgiaGreeceEgyptSyriacEthiopiaOttoman

EmpireBulgariaRussiaSerbiaNorth America

Middle Ages

PelagianismGregory ICelticGermanic Anglo-SaxonFranksGothicScandinavian

IcelandSlavs BohemiaBulgariaKievan

Rus'MoraviaPolandPomeraniaInvestitureAnselmAbelardBernardBogomilsBosnianCathar

sApostolic BrethrenDulcinianCrusadesWaldensiansInquisitionEarly

ScholasticismChristian mysticismDominicFrancisBonaventureAquinas Five

WaysWycliffeAvignonPapal SchismBohemian ReformationHusConciliarism Synods

Reformation

and

Protestantism

ErasmusEucharistCalvinist–Arminian debateArminianismWars Resistance

theoriesSeparation of church and stateNicodemitesHymnody of continental

EuropeFormal and material principlesLaw and GospelLiteratureProtestant work ethic

Lutheranism

Luther Ninety-five ThesesDiet of WormsTheologyBibleMelanchthonBook of

ConcordOrthodoxyEucharistArt

Calvinism

ZwingliCalvinHuguenotsPresbyterianismScotlandKnoxTULIPBaptismDortThree Forms

of UnityWestminsterOrthodoxyMetrical psalters

Anglicanism

(Timeline)

[Henry VIII](#)[Cranmer](#)[Elizabethan 39 Articles](#)[Puritans](#)[Civil War](#)[Church music](#)[Book of Common Prayer](#)[King James Version](#)
[Anabaptism](#)
[Theology](#)[Radical Reformation](#)[Grebel](#)[Swiss Brethren](#)[Müntzer](#)[Martyrs' Synod](#)[Menno Simons](#)[Smyth](#)[Martyrs Mirror](#)[Ausbund](#)
[1640–1789](#)
[Revivalism](#)[Missionaries timeline](#)[Baptists Separation of church and state](#)[Edicts of toleration](#)[Congregationalism](#)[First Great Awakening](#)[Methodism](#)[Millerism](#)[Pietism](#)[Fostering of early experimental science](#)[Neo- and Old Lutherans](#)
[1789–present](#)
[Camp meeting](#)[Holiness movement](#)[Second Great Awakening](#)[Restorationists](#)[Jehovah's Witnesses](#)[Mormonism](#)[Seventh-day Adventist](#)[Adventism](#)[Oxford Movement](#)[Laestadianism](#)[Finnish Awakening](#)[Christian existentialism](#)[Third Great Awakening](#)[Azusa Revival](#)[Gospel music](#)[Fundamentalist – Modernist controversy](#)[Pacifism](#)[Ecumenism](#)[Five solae](#)[Jesus movement](#)[Pentecostalism](#)[Charismatics](#)[Liberation theology](#)[Reformed epistemology](#)[Fourth Great Awakening](#)[Evangelical and Mainline Protestants](#)[Christian right and left](#)[Political influence of Evangelicalism in Latin America](#)
[vte](#)
[Beliefs condemned as heretical by the Catholic Church \(list\)](#)
[Categories: 144 establishments](#)[Christian denominations established in the 2nd century](#)[Christian terminology](#)[Heresy in ancient Christianity](#)[Nontrinitarianism](#)[Schisms in Christianity](#)[Mosaic law in Christian theology](#)[Marcionism](#)[Nature of Jesus Christ](#)[11th-century disestablishments in Asia](#)
 This page was last edited on 1 December 2025, at 05:48 (UTC).
 Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.
[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)
[Wikimedia Foundation](#)
 Powered by [MediaWiki](#)
[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)
[Accessibility feedback](#)
[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)
[Tantric & Siddha Magick](#)

[AI Mode](#)
[All](#)
[Images](#)
[Videos](#)
[Shopping](#)
[Short videos](#)

Forums

More

Tools

AI Overview

Tantric & Siddha Magick involves advanced yogic/spiritual practices from Indian traditions (Tantra, Nath Yoga) aimed at achieving divine union, liberation, and occult powers (siddhis), often through intense focus on energy (Kundalini), rituals (like shava sadhana on corpses), breathwork, mantras, and transmutation of vital fluids for immortality/deification, distinguishing itself from Western magic by its deep spiritual context and goal of moksha (liberation) or jivanmukti (living liberation).

Tantra & Siddha Roots

Tantra: A broad spiritual path focusing on using the material world (including the body, senses, and rituals) as a vehicle for spiritual realization, seeking bliss (bhoga) and mystical powers (siddhi).

Siddha Tradition (Nath Yogis): Masters (Siddhas) who achieve supernatural abilities (siddhis) through rigorous yoga, aiming for eternal life and godhood by transforming bodily energies, with Gorakhnath as a key figure.

Key Practices & Concepts

Siddhis (Occult Powers): Supernatural feats (like flight, invisibility, mind-reading) attained through advanced practice, culminating in immortality.

Kundalini Yoga: Awakening dormant spiritual energy (Kundalini) to rise through chakras, leading to higher states of consciousness.

Rituals (Sadhana): Intense practices, sometimes extreme, like Shava Sadhana (meditating on a corpse) to conquer fear, master death, and gain control over spirits/energies.

Transmutation: Converting sexual fluids into potent elixirs for longevity and spiritual power, a core Nath Siddha practice.

Panchamakara: The Five "M"s (wine, meat, fish, grains, ritual intercourse) used symbolically or literally in some left-hand (Vamachara) Tantric rites for spiritual transformation.

Goal

Liberation (Moksha): The ultimate aim, breaking free from the cycle of rebirth (samsara) and realizing one's true divine nature.

Deification: Becoming god-like, achieving immortality, or attaining divine consciousness.

Distinction from Western Magic

While both use ritual and focus on hidden forces, Tantric/Siddha magick is deeply embedded in Dharmic philosophies (Hinduism/Yoga), emphasizing inner transformation and liberation, whereas Western esotericism often focuses more on manifesting external results or personal power.

Tantra - Wikipedia

The Tantras focus on attaining mystical powers (siddhi) and experiencing bliss in higher realms (bhoga) as part of the practitione...

Wikipedia

the Nāth Siddhas in the light of esoteric notions - UBC Library ...

Abstract. The Nāth Siddhas are North Indian yogis with tantric associations who claim guru Gorakhnath, their founding adept, to be...

UBC Library Open Collections

Shava sadhana - Wikipedia

The sadhu may also call upon his guru (not physically present at the site) to protect him in the ritual. Aghoris of Varanasi are r...

Wikipedia

Show all

Show more

What is Tantra

Siddha Tantra Arts

<https://www.siddhatantraarts.com> › articles › whatistantra

The arts of Tantra is the way of Siddhas through which one can realize one's true nature and achieve cosmic awareness. This allows the divine to manifest in

Missing: Magick | Show results with: Magick

People also ask

What is siddha tantra?

What are the five forbidden things in tantra?

What is tantra magic?

What are the 7 stages of tantra sadhana?

Feedback

The Eighty-Four Mahasiddhas and the Path of Tantra

Keith Dowman

<https://keithdowman.net> › essays › introduction-mahasi...

Literally a siddha is a practitioner of Tantra who is successful in attaining the goal of his meditation. Siddhi is two-fold: magical power (mundane), and the ...

Missing: Magick | Show results with: Magick

Tantra

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Tantra

Tantra is an esoteric yogic tradition that developed on the Indian subcontinent beginning in the middle of the 1st millennium CE, initially within Shaivism ...

Neotantra

Hindu tantric literature

Tantra (disambiguation)

Radha Tantra

The Science Of Tantric Rituals

Somananda Tantra School

<https://somananda.org> › blog › the-science-of-tantric-rit...

Tantric rituals are a spectacular science stemming from the Indian tradition, which have been known to produce supernatural phenomenon.

What is the Tantric Siddha tradition?

Quora

2 answers · 7 years ago

Tantra is the practical method for attaining the supreme entity i.e. God. Lord Shiv was pioneer of this technique and propagated everywhere.

2 answers

.

Top answer:

“Tantrism” or the tantric traditions originated as a development within Hinduism during the first-millennium ce. Over the course of this millennium ...

What is the essence of tantra, alchemy, siddhi, black ...

14 answers

Dec 7, 2021

Does black magic and tantra Vidya exist? If yes than ...

8 answers

Jul 25, 2020

More results from www.quora.com

Missing: Magick | Show results with: Magick

The Magick Path of Tantra

International Nath Order

<https://www.internationalnathorder.org> › the-magick-pa...

The Magick Path of Tantra by Shri Gurudev Mahendranath unveils amoral path to enlightenment via orgasm, meditation, and cosmic harmony, free from dogma.

Tantra: The Most Misunderstood Science of Indian Mysticism

Medium · Jayjit Biswas

30+ likes · 5 months ago

In truth, real Tantra is a razor-sharp path of self-mastery, not a shortcut to money or magic. The louder the tantrik, the emptier the sadhana.

Living Tantra, Part 1: Mystical Rituals

Yoga International

<https://yogainternational.com> › article › view › living-ta...

Sex, drugs, and black magic? A tantric yoga master reveals the truth about this complex and controversial path.

the Nāth Siddhas in the light of esoteric notions - UBC Library ...

UBC Library Open Collections

<https://open.library.ubc.ca> › [clRcle](#) › [ubctheses](#) › [items](#)

by G Djurdjevic · 2005 · Cited by 17 — The Nāth Siddhas are North Indian yogis with tantric associations who claim guru Gorakhnath, their founding adept, to be an incarnation of the god Śiva.

Missing: Magick | Show results with: Magick

Siddha Tantra Arts

YouTube · Siddha Tantra Arts

13.2K+ followers

Creating Sacred Yantras for Ātma Bhāva Mudrā | Consecration, Mantra & Inner Worship

· How Foundation Journeys Prepare for the Vajra Path | Siddha Tantra Arts.

Tantric & Siddha Magick from www.youtube.com

Missing: Magick | Show results with: Magick

People also search for

Tantric rituals meaning

Tantric magic

What is Tantric Buddhism and why is it regarded as controversial

Tantra yoga for couples

Tantra religion

Tantric Hinduism

Tantra meaning in English

Tantra meaning in Sanskrit

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

AI overview is ready [Skip to Content](#)

Siddha Tantra Arts

[Home](#)

Explore

About

Contact

Login

Account

What is Tantra

Tantra is the way. The way of personal refinement and the way the universe is created, expands and the way it will be dissolved. It is all tantra. If our body is the yantra, a vehicle that runs on fuel of prana then Tantra is the inner working or mechanism. The knowledge of how the web of the cosmos is weaved is Tantra. The subtle aspect of how the mind works, how intelligence, memory and emotions shape us. How human beings come together to organize their society for example, democracy is all tantra also. The manner in which the mechanical workings of the human body is, the flow of blood, the flow of air, the postures is also Tantra. Tantra is also the flow of rivers and ocean and the dynamic nature and movements of the planets and the stars. Tantra is the way of matter and energies of the universe.

The first Tantrik of the cosmos is Shiva. He revealed the Tantra to his Shakti, his consort. This formed the basis and crux of all the Tantra knowledge we have amidst us. The manner in which Shiva revealed Tantra to his Shakti in form of conversation, gave rise to the whole system of Agama-Nigama. Agama where Shiva reveals and Shakti listens. Nigama where Shakti asks and understands Tantra from Shiva. All Tantra is Shiva - Shakti Tantra. This later gave rise to Shaiva Tantra and Shakta Tantra. Shakta Tantra then later also branched into Saura Tantra, Ganapatya Tantra, Vaishnava Tantra and others.

Shaiva Tantra is the journey back to the source of all manifestations, while Shakta Tantra through its diverse vidyas, upa vidyas, maha vidyas, parma vidyas and others expresses the beauty of manifestation through diverse lenses and iridescent colors.

Tantra reveals the objective sides of the universal self as tattvas or cosmic principles and it also reveals the wisdom of subjective side of the universal self through contemplation practices of visualisation, practices of cosmic sounds, and other mystical practices that uncovers the sheaths of Kalaa, Vidya, Raaga, Kaala and Niyati which veils the Shiva or universal self.

Tantra has two webs of expansion. One is the creation of an external universe from the Hiranyagarbha or ekarnava and the final dissolution into it. The second is the internal journey - creation of the individual self from the cosmic self and the final dissolution or merger into the cosmic self. These two journeys, the outside journey in the macrocosm and the inner journey in the microcosm have the same nature. This is the inner principle of resonance. This is Tantra.

Physically, our bodies contain the same minerals and matter that the stars are made of.

The content of the vast universe is in us as well. And not just in physical matter but in the subtle energetic levels as well. From the tiniest quantum particle to the vastest of the galaxies, the energy of the universe that is ever transforming itself into diverse forms and other kinds of energies, have similar play in our body and mind as well. Siddhas realized these energies in various Mahavidyas. There is an implicit harmony in the universe even if one finds it chaotic or random. Similar harmony exists in our body and mind. When this harmony is disturbed or the balance is shaken, then that gives rise to diseases of body and mind.

Tantra is the refined lifestyle where the limited identity discovers the cosmic nature of its being and artfully expresses it. Tantra can enable radical changes to transform oneself at energetic, emotional and physical level. The arts of Tantra is the way of Siddhas through which one can realize one's true nature and achieve cosmic awareness. This allows the divine to manifest in oneself.

Tantra is a path from the limited individual self to unlimited cosmic self. Siddha Tantra offers ways to expression life in fullness through diverse artforms. To manifest the creativity latent inside through wisdom and transcendental acts.

Tantra is the expressway to rapid evolution. Sometimes it requires one to challenge the religious, cultural and political norms of society. It has challenged traditional models of womanhood by revealing the sacred feminine and its implicit violent and erotic power. Tantra teaches a way of fearlessness. The ways of Tantra has created lofty personalities of great men and women. It has transformed the lives of kings and socially marginalized as well. By shattering the society's conditioning of mind, Tantra transcends the ego-led emotions of fear and aversion and instead nurtures a non-discriminating attitude and acceptance of diverse ways and even taboos.

Tantra gives unfettered access to improve the quality of life in manifestation as well as the path of liberation. It promises longevity and invulnerability in the world. Tantra is also a double edged sword. One can easily be seduced by the power of manifestation one gains from the Tantra practices. This may cause one to get lost in the worldly indulgences. Therefore the ways of Siddhas are needed. It gives the art of Tantra through which one can balance the worldly material gains as well as the spiritual dimensions of life.

Siddha Tantra Arts sees these energies that drive the atoms as no different than the energies that drive our desires. Siddha Tantra Arts trains the mind to open itself by transforming all pleasures into transcendental experiences. Intense awareness of being, where body and mind are present in the activities that triggers sublime nature of one's being. This is the state of Siddha where one enjoys the happiness and joys that the material world offers blissfully , at the same time remains free from the attachments and delusions that one often sees in hedonistic or materialistic people.

Our days are shaped by the motion of our desires. We are driven by our desires from the moment we wake up to the time we fall asleep. Even in dreams. Our senses want to grasp more of its sensory objects. Eyes want to see interesting shapes, colors, forms. Ears want to hear pleasing sounds. Nose actively tries to sniff good and bad odors. Tongue seeks exciting new tastes and our sense of touch wants contact. Siddhas recognize the mind as another sense or Indriya which feeds on ideas and thoughts. Mind is a sense that receives inputs from other senses. It is the desire of mind that drives one to pursue anything be it academics, sports, business, arts or even spiritual pursuits. One can even say that without desire, life is no different than death!

It is often assumed that if desires are fulfilled, it will bring happiness. But by the time a desire is satisfied, another takes its place. So in the quest of happiness through fulfillment of desires, one goes from one desire to the next. Thus the cycle continues. From the rat race of commuting to success, to the next great thing in life. This is the nature of Sansara or the world.

Many see the futility in all this and face existential moments. These surface as mid life crises, addictions to overcome the futility of it all, or even turns a person to spiritual pursuits. But such a spiritual pursuit results in shunning away the desires and in effect blocking the very existence or nature. This path of utmost denial is not a complete manifestation but a necessary step for many to evolve.

Unlike religious doctrines, Siddha Tantra does not believe in shunning the desires in this manner. Tantra sees the powerful energies flamed by our desires as vibrant potency and artfully channelizes it for spiritual evolution. Siddha Tantra Arts shows how every experience, no matter good, bad, ugly, religious or irreligious, all experiences can be transformed into the path of fulfillment. Desires are inseparable from life.

Many people have conflicts in their minds about experiencing pleasures and doing spiritual or religious practices. They assume that religion implies renouncing desires or shunning pleasures of life. Negating pleasures, desires, spontaneity and shunning freedom of expression is not their idea of religion. Religion appears as a mode of suppression for them. Religion is then battled off as mere superstition.

Because of quick results, tantra practices have become very common. Instead of shunning desires, tantra uses the desires as one uses ghee in fire. But desires can be double edged swords. If not carefully channelled with the right set of intentions, it can even lead a person astray. So tantra is considered a dangerous path as well.

To have a complete manifestation of life's creative expressions, one must become free from these conditionings. It is these conditionings of mind that are at the root of suffering. When one is free from these conditionings then one can experience the wholeness of the being. Tantra is a path to free the mind from the conditioning that limits its understanding of the true nature of being.

Tantra is for everybody. Knowingly or unknowingly one is performing Tantra expressions. It is about realizing it and refining it that separates an unconscious zombie from a cosmic person.

[Previous](#)

[Vajra Yoga](#)

[Tune in](#)

[Sign up with your email address to receive our monthly letter- "The Daak".](#)

[Email Address](#)

[Sign Up](#)

[About Us](#)

[Our Tradition](#)

[Vajra Yogini & Lineage](#)

[Courses](#)

[Books](#)

[Articles](#)

[Videos](#)

[Podcasts](#)

[Terms of Service](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[Vajra Yogini Tantra](#)

[Stockholm - Uppsala](#)

[Sweden](#)

[Follow us on social media](#)[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Witchcraft / Folk Magick / Cunning Arts](#)

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Images](#)

[Videos](#)

[Shopping](#)

[Short videos](#)

[Forums](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[These are results for Witchcraft / Folk Magic / Cunning Arts](#)

[Search instead for Witchcraft / Folk Magick / Cunning Arts](#)

[AI Overview](#)

[What is Cunning Craft and who are Cunning Folk? | by Crystal ...](#)

Witchcraft, Folk Magic, and Cunning Arts refer to various traditional practices involving magic, healing, and divination, often seen in historical European and American contexts, where "Cunning Folk" (wise men/women) used charms, remedies, and rituals for practical good, distinct from the malevolent "witches" of popular lore, though authorities often conflated them; these traditions blend spiritual belief, natural knowledge, and community help, focusing on tangible results like healing, finding love, or protection, contrasting with modern Wicca/Paganism but sharing roots in older, earth-based magic.

Core Concepts

Cunning Folk (Wise Ones): Community figures (often elders, midwives, healers) known for "cunning" or secret knowledge, providing charms, remedies, and spells for protection, healing, finding lost items, or ensuring love/luck, according to sources like Wikipedia and Art Of The Root.

Folk Magic: Practical, often localized magic rooted in cultural traditions, using everyday objects (herbs, stones, water) and rituals, common in Appalachian and other traditions, notes Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage.

Witchcraft: Historically, often a negative label for those accused of harmful magic or diabolism, distinct from the benevolent work of cunning folk, though Puritan writers tried to merge the concepts, writes wildhunt.org and YouTube.

Key Characteristics

Practical Focus: Aims for tangible results (healing, love, fortune), not just spiritual enlightenment, explain wildhunt.org and YouTube.

Community-Based: Often provided services (like love spells or cures) within their villages, says HistoryExtra.

Syncretic: Blends indigenous beliefs with European practices, seen in American Appalachian magic, note Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage and Wikipedia.

Modern Relevance

These historical practices are explored in art (like Stanford University) and contemporary paganism, connecting to the desire for meaning and agency, say Stanford University and wildhunt.org.

They contrast with modern witchcraft (Wicca, etc.) but share roots, offering a window into pre-scientific approaches to life's challenges, according to Medium.

Exhibit at Cantor Arts Center: Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and ...

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge Cunning Folk considers magical practice, practitioners, and their persecutio...

Stanford University

Cunning Folk and Practical Magic with Dr Tabitha Stanmore

Jun 6, 2025 — person who might be a shepherd say but they also have a couple of spells that they use to keep their flocks. going um t...

YouTube

·Icy Sedgwick

8m

Appalachian Folk Magic: Generations of “Granny Witchcraft” and Spiritual Work | Folklife Magazine

Aug 14, 2023 — The tradition was started by the Cherokee and Choctaw, who combined nature and spiritual ritual. European settlers bro...

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Show all

Show more

Cunning Folk | Cantor Arts Center Exhibitions

Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

<https://museum.stanford.edu/exhibitions/cunning-folk>

Cunning Folk. Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge. October 15, 2025–February 22, 2026.

People also ask

What kind of magic do cunning men use?

Are cunning folk the same as witches?

What is the difference between magic and witchcraft?

What are the cunning folk?

Feedback

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge

Stanford University

<https://events.stanford.edu/event/cunning-folk-witch...>

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge · Wednesday, December 17, 2025 11am to 6pm PT · Thursday, December 18, 2025 11am to 8pm PT · Friday, December ...

Cunning folk

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cunning_folk

Their practices were known as the cunning craft. Their services also included thwarting witchcraft. Although some cunning folk were denounced as witches ...

European names

Scandinavia

Britain

Italy

Videos

‘Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge ...

Facebook · Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

Oct 15, 2025

Facebook · Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

0:24

Unlocking the Mysteries of Magic: The Cunning Folk Exhibition

Instagram · Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

Oct 15, 2025

Instagram · Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

0:23

Cunning Folk and Practical Magic with Dr Tabitha Stanmore

YouTube · Icy Sedgwick

Jun 7, 2025

YouTube · Icy Sedgwick

52:09

Cunning folk are service magicians who sell practical magic to their neighbors. They were often seen as helpful members of the community, unlike witches who were accused of dark magic.

Practical magic: curses, spells & cunning folk | HistoryExtra ...

YouTube · HistoryExtra

Aug 20, 2024

YouTube · HistoryExtra

34:38

6 key moments in this video

Feedback

View all

'Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge' at Cantor Art ...

See Great Art

<https://www.seegreatart.art> › witchcraft-magic-and-occu...

Oct 12, 2025 — "Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge" explores the intersection of artistic and magical practice in early modern Europe.

Wise-Women & Cunning Folk Healers

The University of Alabama at Birmingham

<https://guides.library.uab.edu> › c.php

Dec 5, 2022 — Witchcraft, Women & the Healing Arts in the Early Modern Period: Wise-Women & Cunning Folk Healers ... This guide is an online version of the ...

Traditional witchcraft is based on the traditions of the old ...

Facebook · asolitarypagan.com

5 comments · 1 year ago

The relationship between cunning-craft and witchcraft is controversial. The original cunning folk were often times witch hunters; seeking out ...

Top answer:

Depends on the tradition, some have chosen the mantle Christians give them. Using

words like ...

Appalachian Folk Magic: Generations of “Granny Witchcraft ...

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

<https://folklife.si.edu> › magazine › appalachian-folk-magic

Aug 15, 2023 — He is another hereditary witch, or someone born into a family with an existing tradition of witchcraft. Along with his wife, Appalachian water ...

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge ...

Roborant Review

<https://www.roborantreview.com> › reviews › cunning-f...

Dec 2, 2025 — Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge, Cantor Arts ...

cunning and wisdom give way to witchcraft, one may begin to wonder why?

Images

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge ...

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge ...

Stanford Events - Stanford University

The Cunning Folk's Book of Cottage Witchcraft: Spells, Charms & Traditions

The Cunning Folk's Book of Cottage Witchcraft: Spells, Charms & Traditions

Art Of The Root

Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits - Wikipedia

Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits - Wikipedia

en.wikipedia.org

Show more images

People also search for

Cunning folk witchcraft

Cunning Folk Cantor

English folk magic

Types of folk magic

Cunning Folk book

Cunning folk practices

Cunning folk meaning

Folk magic vs witchcraft

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

[AI overview is ready](#)[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Witchcraft](#)

AI Mode

All

Images

Videos

Shopping

Short videos

News

More

Tools

AI Overview

Witches & Witchcraft | My Jewish Learning

Witchcraft refers to the practice of magic or supernatural powers, historically associated with causing harm (maleficium) and often linked to evil spirits or the Devil, leading to accusations and witch hunts, but today also encompasses modern, nature-based spiritual paths like Wicca, which use magic for healing, guidance, and personal growth, emphasizing benevolent intent, reverence for nature, and individual spiritual paths.

Historical & Traditional Views

Harmful Magic: In many cultures, witchcraft was seen as using occult powers to bring misfortune to others, often stemming from social tensions or disputes.

Religious Connection: The medieval Church linked witchcraft to heresy, apostasy, and pacts with the Devil, leading to severe persecution.

Accusations as Social Control: Accusations served as a cultural tool to punish non-conformity, with the accused often targeted due to jealousy or community conflicts, not actual malicious magic.

Modern & Contemporary Views (Wicca & Neo-Paganism)

Nature-Based Spirituality: Modern witchcraft (like Wicca) is a spiritual path focused on reverence for the Earth, natural cycles, and deities (often a God and Goddess).

Benevolent Magic: Practices focus on beneficial magic for healing, guidance, divination, and self-improvement, rejecting the idea of harming others due to principles like karma (the "threefold law").

Personal & Diverse: Practices vary widely, involving rituals, herbs, crystals, and tools like wands, with emphasis on personal energy, self-honoring, and unique paths.

Key Distinctions

Intent: Traditional witchcraft (in accusation) was seen as evil and harmful; modern witchcraft is largely benevolent.

Belief System: Modern witchcraft is a religion or spirituality, distinct from historical beliefs about witches communing with demons.

Practice: Modern practitioners engage in personal spiritual development, unlike the fearful stereotypes.

Witchcraft - Wikipedia

Belief in witchcraft as malevolent magic is attested from ancient Mesopotamia, and in Europe, belief in witches traces back to cla...

Wikipedia

Witchcraft - UK Parliament

Witchcraft, a perceived facility to summon evil spirits and demons to do harm to others, was linked to religion to the extent that...

UK Parliament

Witchcraft | Definition, History, Trials, Witch Hunts, & Facts | Britannica

Nov 6, 2025 — witchcraft, term usually applied to harm brought upon others through the use of supernatural or occult powers. The pers...

Britannica

Show all

Show more

Witchcraft

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Witchcraft>

Witchcraft is the use of magic by a person called a witch. Traditionally, "witchcraft" means the use of magic to inflict supernatural harm or misfortune on ...

Neopagan witchcraft

European witchcraft

Asian witchcraft

Modern witch hunts

People also ask

What are the beliefs of witchcraft?

What is the sin of witchcraft in the Bible?

What does witchcraft mean in the Bible?

What is the synonym of witchcraft?

Feedback

Witchcraft

Reddit · r/witchcraft

598.5K+ followers

r/witchcraft: r/Witchcraft is a welcoming and inclusive space in which to share knowledge, discuss, ask questions, and further the progression of witchcraft ...
Witchcraft 101: What is Witchcraft?

Viva La Buttercream

<https://vivalabuttercream.com> › blog › witchcraft-101

Aug 1, 2025 — Witchcraft in its most basic form, involves working with tools and intentions, to bring about desired outcomes. It doesn't involve the Devil, ...
What people are saying

1:02

CNN. . Witchcraft, Wicca and Paganism are more popular than ever, with some estimates topping 2 million practitioners in the US. CNN's Donie O'Sullivan met with modern witches to discover what they've found in witchcraft that they haven't elsewhere.
Stream
2 weeks ago

cnn · Facebook
Company

What is a witch?
1 month ago

Sharon Blackie · Substack
Psychologist & author

1:18
Inside the growing world of witchcraft in America
12.8K+ views · 3 weeks ago

CNN · YouTube
News & information network

56:28
Prophet Elvis Kernyuy. . Can I Prophecy? Join Quickly // God is uprooting all the witchcraft charms that were buried against you.  WhatsApp +237 672 415 632
150+ reactions · 1 day ago

prelkerny · Facebook
Founder of SORIM

0:57

I come from a village known for witchcraft #learnmorejonasicomedy #standupcomedy
#zimtiktokers #learnmorejonasi #Comedy
2.9K+ views · 2 hours ago

LEARNMORE · TikTok
Comedian

0:33

The Celtic Witch)0(. Longing Mushroom · Elf Magic. Witchcraft is a beautiful path because it invites you to slow down and truly see the world — the way leaves whisper, candles glow, seasons shift, and intuition nudges quietly from within. It's a path of connectio
1.5K+ reactions · 1 week ago

TheCelticWitchmoonstone · Facebook
Witchcraft enthusiast
Modern witch hunts

·
Posts discuss modern witch hunts, drawing parallels to Salem, addressing misogyny, and exploring the use of law as a weapon.
Experiences with spells

·
Users share experiences with love, money, and protection spells, discussing successes, concerns, and cautionary tales about Etsy witches.
Practicing money magic

·
Posts discuss money bowls, spells, and manifestation techniques, with users sharing tips and experiences for attracting abundance and financial success.

Show 3 more

Videos

The Philosophy of Witchcraft

YouTube · ESOTERICA

Oct 17, 2025

YouTube · ESOTERICA

46:16

Philosophers of the 17th century debated the existence of witches and witchcraft, with some expressing skepticism and criticizing the witch trials.

Witchcraft for beginners: the pillars for a magical existence

YouTube · Karissa Love

Jan 19, 2025

YouTube · Karissa Love

25:23

Witchcraft is a suspension of what we see and a belief in what we cannot see. It is the manipulation of energy for a specific desired outcome.

What is Modern Witchcraft?

YouTube · Moon Books Publishing

Sep 2, 2024

YouTube · Moon Books Publishing

16:43

Modern witchcraft is a diverse practice with many different beliefs and practices. It can be a religion, a spirituality, or a personal practice.

Feedback

View all

Witchcraft | Definition, History, Trials, Witch Hunts, & Facts

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com> › ... › Religious Beliefs

Nov 6, 2025 — Witchcraft, term usually applied to harm brought upon others through the use of supernatural or occult powers.

A Journey into Witchcraft Beliefs

English Heritage

<https://www.english-heritage.org.uk> › learn › histories › j...

The history of witchcraft is complex, and often raises more questions than it answers.

Where did witches come from? And did they always arrive on ...

What is the definition of witchcraft? What do witches ...

Quora

7 answers · 2 years ago

Most definitions describe witchcraft as the belief in the supernatural and the use of spells. Historically, witches were looked at as harmful.

7 answers

.

Top answer:

The craft of the wise. Manipulation of energy to bring about change.

Witchcraft! | Board Game

BoardGameGeek

<https://boardgamegeek.com> › boardgame › witchcraft

Witchcraft! is a fast-playing, card-driven solitaire game where you lead a coven of witches in a fantasy world where magic is real—and so are the monsters.

7.7/10(2,168)

Witchcraft: A Handbook of Magic Spells and Potions ...

Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com> › Witchcraft-Handbook-Magi...

Tap into the magic all around you with Witchcraft, an illustrated guide to ancient potions, spells, chants, rituals, and incantations from around the world.

30-day returns

People also search for

Witchcraft PDF

Witchcraft taschen

Witchcraft Book

Witchcraft movie

Is witchcraft real

Types of witchcraft

Witchcraft history

Witchcraft spells

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Witchcraft

Witchcraft 101: Your Beginner's Guide to Spells, Tools ...

Witchcraft And Black Magic In The United States | Various ...

Witchcraft (2020) - IMDb

Witchcraft 101: Your Beginner's Guide to Spells, Tools ...

Witchcraft is the use of magic by a person called a witch. Traditionally, "witchcraft" means the use of magic to inflict supernatural harm or misfortune on others, and this remains the most common and widespread meaning.

Source:

Wikipedia

People also search for

Magic

Divination

Necromancy

Black magic

Feedback

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Witchcraft

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This article is about traditional views of witchcraft. For an overview of Neopagan witchcraft, see Neopagan witchcraft. For the modern pagan religion, see Wicca. For other uses, see Witchcraft (disambiguation).

"Witch" redirects here. For other uses, see Witch (disambiguation).

Depiction of witchcraft in John William Waterhouse's painting The Magic Circle (1886)

Part of a series on

Witchcraft

By region

AfricaAsiaEurope GoetiaRomaLatin AmericaMiddle EastNorth AmericaOceania

Modern movements

Neopagan WiccaFeminist Dianic

Related topics

Cunning folkFolk religionMagic BlackGreyWhiteMagic and religionShamanismWitch as an archetypeWitch-cult hypothesisWitch hunt in the early modern period

vte

Part of a series on

Magic

Background

Forms

Apotropaic magicBlack magicCeremonial magicChaos

magicDivinationEvocationGoetiaGray magicInvocationNatural magicNecromancySex

magicShamanismSigilsSympathetic magicThaumaturgyTheurgyWhite magicWitchcraft

Religion

Related topics

vte

Witchcraft is the use of magic by a person called a witch. Traditionally, "witchcraft" means the use of magic to inflict supernatural harm or misfortune on others, and this remains the most common and widespread meaning.[1] Though the idea of witchcraft is largely imaginary, it has nevertheless served in many cultures as a way to explain the presence of evil.[2] The belief in witches has been found throughout history in a great number of societies worldwide. Most of these societies have used protective magic or counter-magic against witchcraft, and have shunned, banished, imprisoned, physically punished or killed alleged witches. Anthropologists use the term "witchcraft" for similar beliefs about harmful occult practices in different cultures, and these societies often use the term when speaking in English.[3][4][5]

Belief in witchcraft as malevolent magic is attested from ancient Mesopotamia, and in Europe, belief in witches traces back to classical antiquity. In medieval and early modern Europe, accused witches were usually women[6] who were believed to have secretly used black magic (maleficium) against their own community. Usually, accusations of witchcraft were made by neighbors of accused witches, and followed from social tensions. Witches were sometimes said to have communed with demons or with the Devil, though such accusations were mainly made against perceived opponents of the Church.[7] It was thought witchcraft could be thwarted by white magic, provided by 'cunning folk' or 'wise people'. Suspected witches were often prosecuted and punished, if found guilty or simply believed to be guilty. European witch-hunts and witch trials in the early modern period led to tens of thousands of executions. While magical healers and midwives were sometimes accused of witchcraft,[8][4][9][10] they made up a minority of those accused. European belief in witchcraft gradually dwindled during and after the Age of Enlightenment.

Many indigenous belief systems that include the concept of witchcraft likewise define witches as malevolent, and seek healers (such as medicine people and witch doctors) to ward off and undo bewitchment.[11][12] Some African and Melanesian peoples believe witches are driven by an evil spirit or substance inside them. Modern witch-hunting takes place in parts of Africa and Asia.

Since the 1930s, followers of certain kinds of modern paganism identify as witches and redefine the term "witchcraft" as part of their neopagan beliefs and practices.[13][14][15] Other neo-pagans avoid the term due to its negative connotations.[16]

Concept

The Witches by Hans Baldung (woodcut), 1508

The most common meaning of "witchcraft" worldwide is the use of harmful magic.[17] Belief in malevolent magic and the concept of witchcraft has lasted throughout recorded history and has been found in cultures worldwide, regardless of development.[3][18] Most societies have feared an ability by some individuals to cause supernatural harm and misfortune to others. This may come from mankind's tendency "to want to assign occurrences of remarkable good or bad luck to agency, either human or superhuman".[19] Historians and anthropologists see the concept of "witchcraft" as one of the ways humans have tried to explain strange misfortune.[19][20] Some cultures have feared witchcraft much less than others because they tend to have other explanations for strange misfortune.[19] For example, the Gaels of Ireland and the Scottish Highlands historically held a strong belief in fairy folk, who could cause supernatural harm, and witch-hunting was very rare in these regions compared to other regions of the British Isles.[21]

Historian Ronald Hutton outlined five key characteristics ascribed to witches and witchcraft by most cultures that believe in this concept: the use of magic to cause harm or misfortune to others; it was used by the witch against their own community; powers of witchcraft were believed to have been acquired through inheritance or initiation; it was seen as immoral and often thought to involve communion with evil beings; and witchcraft could be thwarted by defensive magic, persuasion, intimidation or physical punishment of the alleged witch.[17]

A common belief worldwide is that witches use objects, words, and gestures to cause supernatural harm, or that they simply have an innate power to do so. Hutton notes that both kinds of practitioners are often believed to exist in the same culture and that the two often overlap, in that someone with an inborn power could wield that power through material objects.[22]

One of the most influential works on witchcraft and concepts of magic was E. E. Evans-Pritchard's *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*, a study of Azande witchcraft beliefs published in 1937. This provided definitions for witchcraft which became a convention in anthropology.[20] However, some researchers argue that the general adoption of Evans-Pritchard's definitions constrained discussion of witchcraft beliefs, and even broader discussion of magic and religion, in ways that his work does not support.[23] Evans-Pritchard reserved the term "witchcraft" for the actions of those who inflict harm by their inborn power and used "sorcery" for those who needed tools to do so.[24] Historians found these definitions difficult to apply to European witchcraft, where witches were believed to use physical techniques, as well as some who were believed to cause harm by thought alone.[25][26] The distinction "has now largely been abandoned, although some anthropologists still sometimes find it relevant to the particular societies with which they are concerned".[22]

While most cultures believe witchcraft to be something willful, some Indigenous peoples

in Africa and Melanesia believe witches have a substance or an evil spirit in their bodies that drives them to do harm.[22] Such substances may be believed to act on their own while the witch is sleeping or unaware.[23] The Dobu people believe women work harmful magic in their sleep while men work it while awake.[27] Further, in cultures where substances within the body are believed to grant supernatural powers, the substance may be good, bad, or morally neutral.[28][29] Hutton draws a distinction between those who unwittingly cast the evil eye and those who deliberately do so, describing only the latter as witches.[19]

The universal or cross-cultural validity of the terms "witch" and "witchcraft" are debated. [20] Hutton states:

[Malevolent magic] is, however, only one current usage of the word. In fact, Anglo-American senses of it now take at least four different forms, although the one discussed above seems still to be the most widespread and frequent. The others define the witch figure as any person who uses magic ... or as the practitioner of nature-based Pagan religion; or as a symbol of independent female authority and resistance to male domination. All have validity in the present.[19]

According to the United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extrajudicial, Summary or Arbitrary Executions there is "difficulty of defining 'witches' and 'witchcraft' across cultures—terms that, quite apart from their connotations in popular culture, may include an array of traditional or faith healing practices".[30]

Anthropologist Fiona Bowie notes that the terms "witchcraft" and "witch" are used differently by scholars and the general public in at least four ways.[20] Neopagan writer Isaac Bonewits proposed dividing witches into even more distinct types including, but not limited to: Neopagan, Feminist, Neogothic, Neoclassical, Classical, Family Traditions, Immigrant Traditions, and Ethnic.[31]

Etymology

Further information: Witch (word)

The word "witchcraft" is over a thousand years old: Old English formed the compound *wiccecræft* from *wicce* ('witch') and *cræft* ('craft').[32] The masculine form was *wicca* ('male sorcerer').[33]

According to the Oxford English Dictionary, *wicce* and *wicca* were probably derived from the Old English verb *wiccian*, meaning 'to practice witchcraft'.[34] *Wiccian* has a cognate in Middle Low German *wicken* (attested from the 13th century). The further etymology of this word is problematic. It has no clear cognates in other Germanic languages outside of English and Low German, and there are numerous possibilities for the Indo-European root from which it may have derived.

Another Old English word for 'witch' was *hægtes* or *hægtesse*, which became the modern English word "hag" and is linked to the word "hex". In most other Germanic

languages, their word for 'witch' comes from the same root as these; for example German Hexe and Dutch heks.[35]

In colloquial modern English, the word witch is particularly used for women.[36] A male practitioner of magic or witchcraft is more commonly called a 'wizard', or sometimes, 'warlock'. When the word witch is used to refer to a member of a neo-pagan tradition or religion (such as Wicca), it can refer to a person of any gender.[37]

Beliefs about practices

Preparation for the Witches' Sabbath by David Teniers the Younger. It shows a witch brewing a potion overlooked by her familiar spirit or a demon; items on the floor for casting a spell; and another witch reading from a grimoire while anointing the buttocks of a young witch about to fly upon an inverted besom.

Witches are commonly believed to cast curses; a spell or set of magical words and gestures intended to inflict supernatural harm.[38] Cursing could also involve inscribing runes or sigils on an object to give that object magical powers; burning or binding a wax or clay image (a poppet) of a person to affect them magically; or using herbs, animal parts and other substances to make potions or poisons.[39][40][41][22] Witchcraft has been blamed for many kinds of misfortune. In Europe, by far the most common kind of harm attributed to witchcraft was illness or death suffered by adults, their children, or their animals. "Certain ailments, like impotence in men, infertility in women, and lack of milk in cows, were particularly associated with witchcraft". Illnesses that were poorly understood were more likely to be blamed on witchcraft. Edward Bever writes: "Witchcraft was particularly likely to be suspected when a disease came on unusually swiftly, lingered unusually long, could not be diagnosed clearly, or presented some other unusual symptoms".[42]

A common belief in cultures worldwide is that witches tend to use something from their target's body to work magic against them; for example hair, nail clippings, clothing, or bodily waste.[22] Such beliefs are found in Europe, Africa, South Asia, Polynesia, Melanesia, and North America.[22] Another widespread belief among Indigenous peoples in Africa and North America is that witches cause harm by introducing cursed magical objects into their victim's body; such as small bones or ashes.[22] James George Frazer described this kind of magic as imitative.[a]

In some cultures, witches are believed to use human body parts in magic,[22] and they are commonly believed to murder children for this purpose. In Europe, "cases in which women did undoubtedly kill their children, because of what today would be called postpartum psychosis, were often interpreted as yielding to diabolical temptation".[44]

Witches are believed to work in secret, sometimes alone and sometimes with other witches. Hutton writes: "Across most of the world, witches have been thought to gather at night, when normal humans are inactive, and also at their most vulnerable in sleep". [22] In most cultures, witches at these gatherings are thought to transgress social norms

by engaging in cannibalism, incest and open nudity.[22]

Witches around the world commonly have associations with animals.[45] Rodney Needham identified this as a defining feature of the witch archetype.[46] In some parts of the world, it is believed witches can shapeshift into animals,[47] or that the witch's spirit travels apart from their body and takes an animal form, an activity often associated with shamanism.[47] Another widespread belief is that witches have an animal helper. [47] In English these are often called "familiars", and meant an evil spirit or demon that had taken an animal form.[47] As researchers examined traditions in other regions, they widened the term to servant spirit-animals which are described as a part of the witch's own soul.[48]

Necromancy is the practice of conjuring the spirits of the dead for divination or prophecy, although the term has also been applied to raising the dead for other purposes. The biblical Witch of Endor performed it (1 Samuel 28th chapter), and it is among the witchcraft practices condemned by Ælfric of Eynsham:[49][50][51] "Witches still go to cross-roads and to heathen burials with their delusive magic and call to the devil; and he comes to them in the likeness of the man that is buried there, as if he arises from death." [52]

J.D. Krige argues that belief in witchcraft also serves various functions. One such function, he notes, is psychological: it enables people to account for failures not as a result of any fault of their own but due to the doings of others or other external malevolent forces. In this way, people can "compensate for their inadequacy and continue to feel that they are masters of their own fate".[53]

Witchcraft and folk healers

Main article: Cunning folk

Diorama of a cunning woman or wise woman in the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic
Most societies that have believed in harmful or black magic have also believed in helpful or white magic.[54] Where belief in harmful magic is common, it is typically forbidden by law as well as hated and feared by the general populace, while helpful or apotropaic (protective) magic is tolerated or accepted by the population, even if the orthodox establishment opposes it.[55]

In these societies, practitioners of helpful magic provide (or provided) services such as breaking the effects of witchcraft, healing, divination, finding lost or stolen goods, and love magic.[56] In Britain, and some other parts of Europe, they were commonly known as 'cunning folk' or 'wise people'. [56] Alan Macfarlane wrote that while cunning folk is the usual name, some are also known as 'blessers' or 'wizards', but might also be known as 'white', 'good', or 'unbinding witches'. [57] Historian Owen Davies says the term "white witch" was rarely used before the 20th century.[58] Ronald Hutton uses the general term "service magicians". [56] Often these people were involved in identifying alleged witches.[54]

Such helpful magic-workers "were normally contrasted with the witch who practiced maleficium—that is, magic used for harmful ends".[59] In the early years of the European witch hunts "the cunning folk were widely tolerated by church, state and general populace".[59] Some of the more hostile churchmen and secular authorities tried to smear folk-healers and magic-workers by falsely branding them 'witches' and associating them with harmful 'witchcraft',[56] but generally the masses did not accept this and continued to make use of their services.[60] The English MP and skeptic Reginald Scot sought to disprove magic and witchcraft altogether, writing in *The Discoverie of Witchcraft* (1584), "At this day, it is indifferent to say in the English tongue, 'she is a witch' or 'she is a wise woman'".[61] Historian Keith Thomas adds "Nevertheless, it is possible to isolate that kind of 'witchcraft' which involved the employment (or presumed employment) of some occult means of doing harm to other people in a way which was generally disapproved of. In this sense the belief in witchcraft can be defined as the attribution of misfortune to occult human agency".[4]

Emma Wilby says folk magicians in Europe were viewed ambivalently by communities, and were considered as capable of harming as of healing,[62] which could lead to their being accused as malevolent witches. She suggests some English "witches" convicted of consorting with demons may have been cunning folk whose supposed fairy familiars had been demonised.[63]

Hutton says that magical healers "were sometimes denounced as witches, but seem to have made up a minority of the accused in any area studied".[54] Likewise, Davies says "relatively few cunning-folk were prosecuted under secular statutes for witchcraft" and were dealt with more leniently than alleged witches. The *Constitutio Criminalis Carolina* (1532) of the Holy Roman Empire, and the Danish Witchcraft Act of 1617, stated that workers of folk magic should be dealt with differently from witches.[64] It was suggested by Richard Horsley that 'diviner-healers' (devins-guerisseurs) made up a significant proportion of those tried for witchcraft in France and Switzerland, but more recent surveys conclude that they made up less than 2% of the accused.[65] However, Éva Pócs says that half the accused witches in Hungary seem to have been healers,[66] and Kathleen Stokker says the "vast majority" of Norway's accused witches were folk healers.[67]

Witch-hunts and thwarting witchcraft

Globe icon.

The examples and perspective in this section may not represent a worldwide view of the subject. You may improve this section, discuss the issue on the talk page, or create a new section, as appropriate. (August 2023) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

A witch bottle, used as counter-magic against witchcraft

Societies that believe (or believed) in witchcraft may also believe that it can be thwarted in various ways. One common way is to use protective magic or counter-magic, often

with the help of magical healers such as cunning folk or witch-doctors.[54] This includes performing rituals, reciting charms, or the use of talismans, amulets, anti-witch marks, witch bottles, witch balls, and burying objects such as horse skulls inside the walls of buildings.[68] Another believed cure for bewitchment is to persuade or force the alleged witch to lift their spell.[54] Often, people have attempted to thwart the witchcraft by physically punishing the alleged witch, such as by banishing, wounding, torturing or killing them. Hutton wrote that "In most societies, however, a formal and legal remedy was preferred to this sort of private action", whereby the alleged witch would be prosecuted and then formally punished if found guilty.[54]

Accusations of witchcraft

The torture used against accused witches, 1577

Throughout the world, accusations of witchcraft are often linked to social and economic tensions. Females are most often accused, especially in more male-dominated societies like 16th-century America.[69] However, in some cultures it was mostly males, such as in 17th-century Iceland.[70] In many societies, accusations are directed mainly against the elderly, but in others age is not a factor, and in some cultures it is mainly adolescents who are accused.[71]

Éva Pócs writes that reasons for accusations of witchcraft fall into four general categories. The first three of which were proposed by Richard Kieckhefer, and the fourth added by Christina Lerner:[72]

A person was caught in the act of positive or negative sorcery

A well-meaning sorcerer or healer lost their clients' or the authorities' trust

A person did nothing more than gain the enmity of their neighbors

A person was reputed to be a witch and surrounded with an aura of witch-beliefs or occultism.

Modern witch-hunts

Main articles: Witch-hunt, Witch trials in the early modern period, and Modern witch-hunts

Witch-hunts, scapegoating, and the shunning or murder of suspected witches still occurs.[73] Many cultures worldwide continue to have a belief in the concept of "witchcraft" or malevolent magic.[74]

Apart from extrajudicial violence, state-sanctioned execution also occurs in some jurisdictions. For instance, in Saudi Arabia practicing witchcraft and sorcery is a crime punishable by death and the country has executed people for this crime as recently as 2014.[75][76][77]

Witchcraft-related violence is often discussed as a serious issue in the broader context of violence against women.[78][79][80][81][82] In Tanzania, an estimated 500 older women are murdered each year following accusations of witchcraft or accusations of being a witch, according to a 2014 World Health Organization report.[83]

Children who live in some regions of the world, such as parts of Africa, are also vulnerable to violence stemming from witchcraft accusations.[84][85][86][87] Such incidents have also occurred in immigrant communities in Britain, including the much publicized case of the murder of Victoria Climbié.[88][89]

Religious perspectives

Ancient Mesopotamian religion

A clay tablet from the Maqlû, outlining an ancient Akkadian anti-witchcraft ritual

Main article: Witchcraft in the Middle East

Magic was an important part of ancient Mesopotamian religion and society, which distinguished between 'good' (helpful) and 'bad' (harmful) rites.[90] In ancient Mesopotamia, practitioners mainly used counter-magic against witchcraft (kišpū[91]); the law codes also prescribed the death penalty for those found guilty of witchcraft.[90] According to Tzvi Abusch, ancient Mesopotamian ideas about witches and witchcraft shifted over time, and the early stages were "comparable to the archaic shamanistic stage of European witchcraft".[92] In this early stage, witches were not necessarily considered evil, but took 'white' and 'black' forms, could help others using magic and medical knowledge, generally lived in rural areas, and sometimes exhibited ecstatic behavior.[92]

In ancient Mesopotamia, a witch (m. kaššāpu, f. kaššāptu, from kašāpu ['to bewitch'] [91]) was "usually regarded as an anti-social and illegitimate practitioner of destructive magic ... whose activities were motivated by malice and evil intent and who was opposed by the ašipu, an exorcist or incantation-priest".[92] These ašipu were predominantly male representatives of the state religion, whose main role was to work magic against harmful supernatural forces such as demons.[92] The stereotypical witch mentioned in the sources tended to be those of low status who were weak or otherwise marginalized, including women, foreigners, actors, and peddlers.[90]

The Code of Hammurabi (18th century BCE) allowed someone accused of harmful magic-practice to undergo trial by ordeal—by jumping into a holy river. If they drowned, they were deemed guilty, and the accuser inherited the guilty person's estate. If they survived, the accuser's estate was handed over instead.[90]

The Maqlû ("burning") is an ancient Akkadian text written early in the first millennium BCE, which sets out a Mesopotamian anti-witchcraft ritual.[93] This lengthy ritual includes invoking various gods, burning an effigy of the witch, then dousing and disposing of the remains.[94]

Abrahamic religions

The historical development of witchcraft in the Middle East shows a multi-stage process shaped by culture, spirituality, and societal norms. Ancient witchcraft in the Middle East

intertwined mysticism with nature through rituals and incantations aligned with local beliefs. The position of magic among ancient Jews and within Judaism was complex, with some forms accepted as mysticism and others disapproved of as heresy.[95][96] The medieval Middle East experienced shifting perceptions of witchcraft under Islamic and Christian influences, sometimes revered for healing and other times condemned as heresy.

Jewish

See also: Witchcraft and divination in the Hebrew Bible

Jewish attitudes toward witchcraft were rooted in its association with idolatry and necromancy, and some rabbis even practiced forms of magic themselves.[97][98]

References to witchcraft in the Hebrew Bible highlighted strong condemnations rooted in the "abomination" of magical practices. Christianity later similarly condemned witchcraft, considering it an abomination and using select verses to justify witch hunting during the early modern period.

Christian

Illustration by Martin van Maële of a Witches' Sabbath and Black Mass overseen by a horned Devil, in the 1911 edition of *La Sorcière*, by Jules Michelet

Main article: Christian views on magic

Historically, the Christian concept of witchcraft derives from Old Testament laws against it. In medieval and early-modern Europe, many Christians believed in magic. As opposed to the helpful magic of the cunning folk, witchcraft was seen as evil and associated with Satan and devil worship. This often resulted in deaths, torture and scapegoating (casting blame for misfortune),[99][100] and many years of large-scale witch trials and witch hunts, especially in Protestant Europe, before largely ending during the Age of Enlightenment. Christian views are diverse, ranging from intense belief and opposition (especially by Christian fundamentalists) to non-belief. During the Age of Colonialism, many cultures were exposed to the Western world via colonialism, usually accompanied by intensive Christian missionary activity (see Christianization). In these cultures, beliefs about witchcraft were partly influenced by the prevailing Western concepts of the time.

In Christianity, sorcery came to be associated with heresy and apostasy and was viewed as evil. Among Catholics, Protestants, and the secular leadership of late-medieval/early-modern Europe, fears about witchcraft rose to a fever pitch and sometimes led to large-scale witch hunts. The fifteenth century saw a dramatic rise in awareness and terror of witchcraft. Tens of thousands of people were executed, and others were imprisoned, tortured, banished, and had lands and possessions confiscated. The majority of those accused were women, though in some regions the majority were men.[101][102]:23 In Scots, the word warlock came to be used as the male equivalent of witch (which can be male or female, but is used predominantly for females).[103][104]

The *Malleus Maleficarum* (Hammer of the Witches) was a witch-hunting manual written

in 1486 by German monk-inquisitors Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger. It was used by both Catholics and Protestants[105] for several hundred years, outlining how to identify a witch, what makes a woman more likely than a man to be a witch, how to put a witch on trial, and how to punish a witch. The book defines a witch as evil and typically female. It became the handbook for secular courts throughout Europe, but was not used by the Inquisition, which even cautioned against relying on it.[106] It was the most sold book in Europe for over 100 years (after the Christian Bible).[107]

Islamic

Main article: Islam and magic

Islamic perspectives on magic encompass a wide range of practices,[108] with belief in black magic and the evil eye coexisting alongside strict prohibitions against its practice. [109] The Quran acknowledges the existence of magic and seeks protection from its harm. Islam's stance is against the practice of magic, considering it forbidden, and emphasizes miracles rather than magic or witchcraft.[110] The historical continuity of witchcraft in the Middle East underlines the complex interaction between spiritual beliefs and societal norms across different cultures and epochs.

Modern paganism

The sorceress Ceridwen of Welsh mythology is considered a Goddess in Modern paganism and Wicca.[111]

Main articles: Neopagan witchcraft and Semitic neopaganism

During the 20th century, interest in witchcraft rose in English-speaking and European countries. From the 1920s, Margaret Murray popularized the 'witch-cult hypothesis': the idea that those persecuted as 'witches' in early modern Europe were followers of a benevolent pagan religion that had survived the Christianization of Europe. This has been discredited by further historical research.[112][113][114][115][116]

From the 1930s, occult neopagan groups began to emerge who called their religion a kind of 'witchcraft'. They were initiatory secret societies inspired by Murray's 'witch cult' theory, ceremonial magic, Aleister Crowley's Thelema, and historical paganism.[117] [118][119] The biggest religious movement to emerge from this is Wicca. Today, some Wiccans and members of related traditions self-identify as "witches" and use the term "witchcraft" for their magico-religious beliefs and practices, primarily in Western anglophone countries.[13]

Regional perspectives

Prevalence of belief in witchcraft by country[120]

Socio-demographic correlates of witchcraft beliefs[120]

A 2022 study found that belief in witchcraft, as in the use of malevolent magic or powers, is still widespread in some parts of the world. It found that belief in witchcraft varied from

9% of people in some countries to 90% in others, and was linked to cultural and socioeconomic factors. Stronger belief in witchcraft correlated with poorer economic development, weak institutions, lower levels of education, lower life expectancy, lower life satisfaction, and high religiosity.[121][120]

It contrasted two hypotheses about future changes in witchcraft belief:[120]

witchcraft beliefs should decline "in the process of development due to improved security and health, lower exposure to shocks, spread of education and scientific approach to explaining life events" according to standard modernization theory "some aspects of development, namely rising inequality, globalization, technological change, and migration, may instead revive witchcraft beliefs by disrupting established social order" according to literature largely inspired by observations from Sub-Saharan Africa.

Africa

Main article: Witchcraft in Africa

African witchcraft encompasses various beliefs and practices. These beliefs often play a significant role in shaping social dynamics and can influence how communities address challenges and seek spiritual assistance. Much of what "witchcraft" represents in Africa has been susceptible to misunderstandings and confusion, due to a tendency among western scholars to approach the subject through a comparative lens vis-a-vis European witchcraft.[122] For example, the Maka people of Cameroon believe in an occult force known as djambe, that dwells inside a person. It is often translated as "witchcraft" or "sorcery", but it has a broader meaning that encompasses supernatural harm, healing and shapeshifting; this highlights the problem of using European terms for African concepts.[123]

While some 19th–20th century European colonialists tried to stamp out witch-hunting in Africa by introducing laws banning accusations of witchcraft, some former African colonies introduced laws banning witchcraft after they gained independence. This has produced an environment that encourages persecution of suspected witches.[124]

In the Central African Republic, hundreds of people are convicted of witchcraft yearly, with reports of violence against accused women.[125] The Democratic Republic of the Congo witnessed a disturbing trend of child witchcraft accusations in Kinshasa, leading to abuse and exorcisms supervised by self-styled pastors.[126] In Ghana, there are several "witch camps", where women accused of witchcraft can seek refuge, though the government plans to close them.[127]

In west Kenya, there have been cases of accused witches being burned to death in their homes by mobs.[128] Malawi faces a similar issue of child witchcraft accusations, with traditional healers and some Christian counterparts involved in exorcisms, causing abandonment and abuse of children.[129] In Nigeria, Pentecostal pastors have intertwined Christianity with witchcraft beliefs for profit, leading to the torture and killing of accused children.[130] Sierra Leone's Mende people see witchcraft convictions as

beneficial, as the accused receive support and care from the community.[131]

Lastly, in Zulu culture, healers known as sangomas protect people from witchcraft and evil spirits through divination, rituals and mediumship.[132] However, concerns arise regarding the training and authenticity of some sangomas.

In parts of Africa, beliefs about illness being caused by witchcraft continue to fuel suspicion of modern medicine, with serious healthcare consequences. HIV/AIDS[133] and Ebola[134] are two examples of often-lethal infectious disease epidemics whose medical care and containment has been severely hampered by regional beliefs in witchcraft. Other severe medical conditions whose treatment is hampered in this way include tuberculosis, leprosy, epilepsy and the common severe bacterial Buruli ulcer. [135][136]

Americas

North America

Main article: Witchcraft in North America

North America hosts a diverse array of beliefs about witchcraft, some of which have evolved through interactions between cultures.[137][138]

Native American peoples such as the Cherokee,[139] Hopi,[140] the Navajo[5] among others,[141] believed in malevolent "witch" figures who could harm their communities by supernatural means; this was often punished harshly, including by execution.[142] In these communities, medicine people were healers and protectors against witchcraft. [139][140]

The term "witchcraft" arrived with European colonists, along with European views on witchcraft.[137] This term would be adopted by many Indigenous communities for their own beliefs about harmful magic and harmful supernatural powers. Witch hunts took place among Christian European settlers in colonial America and the United States, most infamously the Salem witch trials in Massachusetts. These trials led to the execution of numerous individuals accused of practicing witchcraft. Despite changes in laws and perspectives over time, accusations of witchcraft persisted into the 19th century in some regions, such as Tennessee, where prosecutions occurred as late as 1833.

Some North American witchcraft beliefs were influenced by beliefs about witchcraft in Latin America, and by African witchcraft beliefs through the slave trade.[143][144][138] Native American cultures adopted the term for their own witchcraft beliefs.[145] Neopagan witchcraft practices such as Wicca then emerged in the mid-20th century. [137][138]

Latin America

Main article: Witchcraft in Latin America

Witchcraft beliefs in Latin America are influenced by Spanish Catholic, Indigenous, and

African beliefs. In Colonial Mexico, the Mexican Inquisition showed little concern for witchcraft; the Spanish Inquisitors treated witchcraft accusations as a "religious problem that could be resolved through confession and absolution". Anthropologist Ruth Behar writes that Mexican Inquisition cases "hint at a fascinating conjecture of sexuality, witchcraft, and religion, in which Spanish, indigenous, and African cultures converged". [146] There are cases where European women and Indigenous women were accused of collaborating to work "love magic" or "sexual witchcraft" against men in colonial Mexico. [147] According to anthropology professor Laura Lewis, "witchcraft" in colonial Mexico represented an "affirmation of hegemony" for women and especially Indigenous women over their white male counterparts in the *casta* system.[148]

Belief in witchcraft is a constant in the history of colonial Brazil, for example the several denunciations and confessions given to the Congregation for the Doctrine of the Faith of Bahia (1591–1593), Pernambuco and Paraíba (1593–1595).[149]

Brujería, often called a Latin American form of witchcraft, is a syncretic Afro-Caribbean tradition that combines Indigenous religious and magical practices from the Caribbean, together with Catholicism, and European witchcraft.[150] The tradition and terminology is considered to encompass both helpful and harmful practices.[151] A male practitioner is called a *brujo*, a female practitioner, a *bruja*. [151] Healers may be further distinguished by the terms *kurioso* or *kuradó*, a man or woman who performs *trabou chikí* ("little works") and *trabou grandi* ("large treatments") to promote or restore health, bring fortune or misfortune, deal with unrequited love, and more serious concerns. Sorcery usually involves reference to an entity referred to as the *almasola* or *homber chiki*. [152]

Asia

Main article: Asian witchcraft

Okabe – The cat witch, by Utagawa Kuniyoshi

East Asia

In Chinese culture, the practice of *Gong Tau* involves black magic for purposes such as revenge and financial assistance.[citation needed] Japanese folklore features witch figures who employ foxes as familiars. Korean history includes instances of individuals being condemned for using spells. The Philippines has its own tradition of Philippine witches, distinct from Western portrayals, with their practices often countered by indigenous Philippine shamans.[citation needed]

Middle East

Main article: Witchcraft in the Middle East

Witchcraft beliefs in the Middle East have a long history, and magic was a part of the ancient cultures and religions of the region.[153]

In ancient Mesopotamia (Sumeria, Assyria, Babylonia), a witch (m. *kaššāpu*, f. *kaššāptu*) was "usually regarded as an anti-social and illegitimate practitioner of

destructive magic ... motivated by malice and evil intent".[92] Ancient Mesopotamian societies mainly used counter-magic against witchcraft (kišpū), but the law codes also prescribed the death penalty for those found guilty of witchcraft.[90]

For the ancient Hittites, magic could only be sanctioned by the state, and accusations of witchcraft were often used to control political enemies.[154]

As the ancient Hebrews focused on their worship on Yahweh, Judaism clearly distinguished between forms of magic and mystical practices which were accepted, and those which were viewed as forbidden or heretical, and thus "witchcraft".[155]

In the medieval Middle East, under Islamic and Christian influences, witchcraft's perception fluctuated between healing and heresy, revered by some and condemned by others.[citation needed] In the present day diverse witchcraft communities have emerged.[citation needed]

Europe

Main article: European witchcraft

Ancient Roman world

Main article: European witchcraft § Antiquity

Gaius Furius Cressinus Accused of Sorcery, Jean-Pierre Saint-Ours, 1792

European belief in witchcraft can be traced back to classical antiquity, when concepts of magic and religion were closely related. During the pagan era of ancient Rome, there were laws against harmful magic.[156] According to Pliny, the 5th century BCE laws of the Twelve Tables laid down penalties for uttering harmful incantations and for stealing the fruitfulness of someone else's crops by magic.[156] The only recorded trial involving this law was that of Gaius Furius Cresimus.[156]

The Classical Latin word *veneficium* meant both poisoning and causing harm by magic (such as magic potions), although ancient people would not have distinguished between the two.[157] In 331 BCE, a deadly epidemic hit Rome and at least 170 women were executed for causing it by *veneficium*. In 184–180 BCE, another epidemic hit Italy, and about 5,000 were executed for *veneficium*.^[157] If the reports are accurate, writes Hutton, "then the Republican Romans hunted witches on a scale unknown anywhere else in the ancient world".^[157]

Under the *Lex Cornelia de sicariis et veneficis* of 81 BCE, killing by *veneficium* carried the death penalty. During the early Imperial era, the *Lex Cornelia* began to be used more broadly against other kinds of magic,^[157] including sacrifices made for evil purposes. The magicians were to be burnt at the stake.^[156]

Witch characters—women who work powerful evil magic—appear in ancient Roman literature from the first century BCE onward. They are typically hags who chant harmful incantations; make poisonous potions from herbs and the body parts of animals and

humans; sacrifice children; raise the dead; can control the natural world; can shapeshift themselves and others into animals; and invoke underworld deities and spirits. They include Lucan's Erichtho, Horace's Canidia, Ovid's Dipsas, and Apuleius's Meroe.[157]

Early modern and contemporary Europe

A 1613 English pamphlet showing "Witches apprehended, examined and executed" icon

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (October 2023) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

By the early modern period, major witch hunts and witch trials began to take place in Europe, partly fueled by religious tensions, societal anxieties, and economic upheaval. One influential text was the *Malleus Maleficarum*, a 1486 treatise that provided a framework for identifying, prosecuting, and punishing witches. Witches were typically seen as people who caused harm or misfortune through black magic, and were sometimes believed to have made a pact with the Devil.[158] Usually, accusations of witchcraft were made by neighbors and followed from social tensions. Accusations were often made against marginalized individuals, women, the elderly, and those who did not conform to societal norms. Women made accusations as often as men. The common people believed that magical healers (called 'cunning folk' or 'wise people') could undo bewitchment. Hutton says that magical healers were sometimes denounced as witches themselves, "but seem to have made up a minority of the accused in any area studied". [54] The witch-craze reached its peak between the 16th and 17th centuries, resulting in the execution of tens of thousands of people. This dark period of history reflects the confluence of superstition, fear, and authority, as well as the societal tendency to find scapegoats for complex problems. A feminist interpretation of the witch trials is that misogynist views led to the association of women and malevolent witchcraft.[158]

During the 16th century and mid 18th century Scotland had 4000-6000 prosecutions against accused witches, a much higher rate than the European average.[159][160]

Russia also experienced its own iteration of witchcraft trials during the 17th century. Witches were often accused of sorcery and engaging in supernatural activities, leading to their excommunication and execution. The blending of ecclesiastical and secular jurisdictions in Russia's approach to witchcraft trials highlighted the intertwined nature of religious and political power during that time. As the 17th century progressed, the fear of witches shifted from mere superstition to a tool for political manipulation, with accusations used to target individuals who posed threats to the ruling elite.[161]

Since the 1940s, neopagan witchcraft movements have emerged in Europe, seeking to revive and reinterpret ancient pagan and mystical practices. Wicca, pioneered by Gerald Gardner, is the most influential. Drawing inspiration from ceremonial magic, historical paganism, and the now-discredited witch-cult theory, Wicca emphasizes a connection to

nature, the divine, and personal growth. Similarly, Stregheria in Italy reflects a desire to reconnect with the country's pagan past. Many of these neopagans self-identify as "witches". Neopagan witchcraft in Europe encompasses a wide range of traditions.
[citation needed]

Oceania

[icon]

This section needs expansion. You can help by adding to it.

Find sources: "Pacific Witchcraft" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR
(October 2023)

Beliefs in witchcraft and sorcery are widespread across Oceania, where traditional spiritual systems often coexist with introduced religions such as Christianity. In many societies, witchcraft serves as an explanation for illness, death, or misfortune, and may be associated with social tensions or unresolved conflicts.

In the Cook Islands, the Māori term for black magic is purepure.[162] Practitioners known as ta'unga historically served as priests, healers, and spiritual advisors. They were believed to possess sacred knowledge and were responsible for conducting rituals, healing the sick, and maintaining spiritual balance within the community.[163]

In Papua New Guinea, belief in witchcraft—often referred to locally as sanguma—remains deeply ingrained in many communities, particularly in the Highlands region. Sorcery is commonly blamed for unexplained deaths, illness, crop failure, or other misfortunes. It is estimated that 50 to 150 people are killed each year in the country as a result of witchcraft accusations.[164] In 2008, reports indicated that more than fifty individuals were killed in two Highlands provinces alone for allegedly practicing sorcery. [165] Victims are often women, and attacks may involve torture, public shaming, or execution. Although the government repealed the Sorcery Act in 2013, which previously allowed sorcery as a defense in murder cases, enforcement of protective laws remains inconsistent, and community-led violence continues.

In Milne Bay Province, including the Samarai Islands, witchcraft beliefs persist, but violence against the accused is significantly lower compared to the Highlands. Anthropological research suggests that local interpretations of witchcraft in these areas are less associated with malevolence and more integrated into broader spiritual and cultural practices. This has been linked to greater social standing for women and fewer gender-based witchcraft accusations.[166]

Other parts of Oceania, including Fiji, Tonga, and Samoa, also maintain traditions involving spiritual power and magical influence. In Fiji, for example, concepts such as valavala vakalou (spiritual acts) and traditional healing practices are still recognized in some rural areas. However, the influence of Christianity and formal legal systems has reduced the prevalence of witchcraft-related violence. In many Pacific Island societies today, witchcraft is viewed through a cultural or religious lens rather than a criminal one, and cases involving supernatural claims are more likely to be addressed through

customary dispute resolution or church-based mediation.

Witches in art and literature

Further information: Witch (archetype) § In art and literature, and List of fictional witches

Albrecht Dürer c. 1500: Witch riding backwards on a goat

Witches have a long history of being depicted in art, although most of their earliest artistic depictions seem to originate in Early Modern Europe, particularly the Medieval and Renaissance periods. Many scholars attribute their manifestation in art as inspired by texts such as *Canon Episcopi*, a demonology-centered work of literature, and *Malleus Maleficarum*, a "witch-craze" manual published in 1487, by Heinrich Kramer and Jacob Sprenger.[167] Witches in fiction span a wide array of characterizations. They are typically, but not always, female, and generally depicted as either villains or heroines. [168]

See also

Aradia, or the Gospel of the Witches – 1899 book by Charles Godfrey Leland

Feminist interpretations of witch trials in the early modern period

Flying ointment – Hallucinogenic salve used in the practice of witchcraft

History of goetia – Magical practice involving evocation of spirits

Kitchen witch – Witch doll

Witches' Sabbath – Gathering of those believed to practice witchcraft

Cunning folk

Notes

"If we analyze the principles of thought on which magic is based, they will probably be found to resolve themselves into two: first, that like produces like, or that an effect resembles its cause; and, second, that things which have once been in contact with each other continue to act on each other at a distance after the physical contact has been severed. The former principle may be called the Law of Similarity, the latter the Law of Contact or Contagion. From the first of these principles, namely the Law of Similarity, the magician infers that he can produce any effect he desires merely by imitating it: from the second he infers that whatever he does to a material object will affect equally the person with whom the object was once in contact, whether it formed part of his body or not." [43]

References

Hutton (2017), p. ix; Thomas (1997), p. 519.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton; Lewis, Ioan M. (2023). "Witchcraft". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 28 June 2023. Retrieved 28 July 2023. Although defined differently in disparate historical and cultural contexts, witchcraft has often been seen, especially in the West, as the work of crones who meet secretly at night, indulge in cannibalism and orgiastic rites with the Devil, or Satan, and perform black magic. Witchcraft thus defined exists more in the imagination of contemporaries than in any objective reality. Yet this stereotype has a long history and has constituted for many cultures a viable explanation of evil in the world.

Singh, Manvir (2 February 2021). "Magic, Explanations, and Evil: The Origins and

Design of Witches and Sorcerers". *Current Anthropology*. 62 (1): 2–29. doi:10.1086/713111. ISSN 0011-3204. S2CID 232214522. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 28 April 2021.

Thomas (1997), p. 519.

Perrone, Bobette; Stockel, H. Henrietta; Krueger, Victoria (1993). *Medicine women, curanderas, and women doctors*. University of Oklahoma Press. p. 189. ISBN 978-0-8061-2512-1. Archived from the original on 23 April 2017. Retrieved 8 October 2010.

"Witchcraft accusations were an 'occupational hazard' for female workers in early modern England". 19 September 2023.

La Fontaine, J. (2016). *Witches and Demons: A Comparative Perspective on Witchcraft and Satanism*. Berghahn Books. pp. 33–34. ISBN 978-1-78533-086-5.

Davies (2003), pp. 7–13.

Riddle, John M. (1997). *Eve's Herbs: A History of Contraception and Abortion in the West*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press. pp. 110–119. ISBN 0-674-27026-6.

Ehrenreich & English (2010), pp. 31–59.

Demetrio, F. R. (1988). *Philippine Studies Vol. 36, No. 3: Shamans, Witches and Philippine Society*, pp. 372–380. Ateneo de Manila University.

Tan, Michael L. (2008). *Revisiting Usog, Pasma, Kulam*. University of the Philippines Press. ISBN 978-971-542-570-4. Archived from the original on 26 January 2021. Retrieved 17 September 2020.

Doyle White, Ethan (2016). *Wicca: History, Belief, and Community in Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Liverpool University Press. pp. 1–9, 73. ISBN 978-1-84519-754-4.

Berger, Helen A.; Ezzy, Douglas (September 2009). "Mass Media and Religious Identity: A Case Study of Young Witches". *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*. 48 (3): 501–514. doi:10.1111/j.1468-5906.2009.01462.x. ISSN 0021-8294. JSTOR 40405642.

Kelly, Aidan A. (1992). "An Update on Neopagan Witchcraft in America". In James R. Lewis; J. Gordon Melton (eds.). *Perspectives on the New Age*. Albany: State University of New York Press. pp. 136–151. ISBN 978-0-7914-1213-8.

Lewis, James (1996). *Magical Religion and Modern Witchcraft*. SUNY Press. p. 376.

Hutton (2017), pp. 3–4.

Ankarloo & Clark (2001), p. xiii.

Hutton (2017), p. 10.

Moro, Pamela A. (2017). "Witchcraft, Sorcery, and Magic". *The International Encyclopedia of Anthropology*. pp. 1–9. doi:10.1002/9781118924396.wbiea1915. ISBN 978-0-470-65722-5.

Hutton (2017), p. 245.

Hutton (2017), pp. 19–22.

Mills, Martin A. (March 2013). "The opposite of witchcraft: Evans-Pritchard and the problem of the person". *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*. 19 (1): 18–33. doi:10.1111/1467-9655.12001. JSTOR 42002806.

Evans-Pritchard, Edward Evan (1937). *Witchcraft, Oracles and Magic Among the Azande*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 8–9. ISBN 978-0-19-874029-2.

Thomas (1997), pp. 464–465.

Ankarloo, Bengt; Henningsen, Gustav (1990). *Early Modern European Witchcraft:*

Centres and Peripheries. Oxford: Oxford University Press. pp. 1, 14.

Hutton (2017), pp. 18–19.

Iniobong Daniel Umotong. "Witchcraft in Africa: malignant or developmental?". www.nigerianjournalonline.com.

Gbule, NJ; Odili, JU (2015). "Socio-Missiological Significance of Witchcraft Belief and Practice in Africa". *African Research Review*. 9 (3): 99. doi:10.4314/afrrrev.v9i3.9.

"Witchcraft and human rights". Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

Adler (2006), pp. 65–68.

Harper, Douglas. "witchcraft (n.)". Online Etymology Dictionary. Archived from the original on 5 November 2013. Retrieved 29 October 2013.

"Home: Oxford English Dictionary". oed.com. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 18 July 2021.

"witch". Oxford English Dictionary (Online ed.). Oxford University Press. (Subscription or participating institution membership required.)

"hag (n.)". Online Etymology Dictionary.

"Definition of WITCH". www.merriam-webster.com. Retrieved 12 October 2023.

Cusack (2009), p. 345.

Levack (2013), p. 54.

Luck, Georg (1985). *Arcana Mundi: Magic and the Occult in the Greek and Roman Worlds; a Collection of Ancient Texts*. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press. pp. 254, 260, 394. ISBN 978-0-8018-2523-1.

Kittredge, George Lyman (1929). *Witchcraft in Old and New England*. New York: Russell & Russell. p. 172. ISBN 978-0-674-18232-5.

Davies, Owen (1999). *Witchcraft, Magic and Culture, 1736–1951*. Manchester, England: Manchester University Press. ISBN 978-0-7190-5656-7.

Levack (2013), pp. 54–55.

Frazer, James (1922). *The Golden Bough*. Bartleby.

Burns, William (2003). *Witch Hunts in Europe and America: An Encyclopedia*. Bloomsbury Publishing. pp. 141–142.

Hutton (2017), pp. 264–277.

Rodney Needham, *Primordial Characters*, Charlottesville, Va, 1978, 26, 42 [ISBN missing]

Hutton (2017), p. 264.

Hutton (2017), p. 269.

Semple, Sarah (December 2003). "Illustrations of damnation in late Anglo-Saxon manuscripts" (PDF). *Anglo-Saxon England*. 32: 231–245. doi:10.1017/S0263675103000115. S2CID 161982897. Archived (PDF) from the original on 31 July 2020. Retrieved 26 October 2018.

Semple, Sarah (June 1998). "A fear of the past: The place of the prehistoric burial mound in the ideology of middle and later Anglo-Saxon England". *World Archaeology*. 30 (1): 109–126. doi:10.1080/00438243.1998.9980400. JSTOR 125012.

Pope, J.C. (1968). *Homilies of Aelfric: a supplementary collection* (Early English Text Society 260). Vol. II. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. p. 796.

Meaney, Audrey L. (December 1984). "Æfric and Idolatry". *Journal of Religious History*.

13 (2): 119–135. doi:10.1111/j.1467-9809.1984.tb00191.x.

Krige, J. D. (1947). "The Social Function Of Witchcraft". *Theoria: A Journal of Social and Political Theory* (1): 20. ISSN 0040-5817. JSTOR 41801323.

Hutton (2017), pp. 24–25.

Hutton, Ronald (2006). *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*. London: A&C Black. p. 203. ISBN 978-1-85285-555-0. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 22 November 2020.

Hutton (2017), pp. x–xi.

Macfarlane, Alan (1999). *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart England: A Regional and Comparative Study*. Psychology Press. p. 130. ISBN 978-0-415-19612-3.

Davies (2003), p. xiii.

Willis (2018), pp. 27–28.

Grell, Ole Peter; Scribner, Robert W. (2002). *Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation*. Cambridge University Press. p. 45. Not all the stereotypes created by elites were capable of popular reception [...] The most interesting example concerns cunning folk, whom secular and religious authorities consistently sought to associate with negative stereotypes of superstition or witchcraft. This proved no deterrent to their activities or to the positive evaluation in the popular mind of what they had to offer.

Scot, Reginald (1584). "Chapter 9". *The Discoverie of Witchcraft*. Vol. Booke V.

Wilby (2005), pp. 51–54.

Wilby (2005), p. 123.

Davies (2003), p. 164.

Davies (2003), p. 167.

Pócs (1999), p. 12.

Stokker, Kathleen (2007). *Remedies and Rituals: Folk Medicine in Norway and the New Land*. St. Paul, MN: Minnesota Historical Society Press. pp. 81–82. ISBN 978-0-87351-750-8. Supernatural healing of the sort practiced by Inger Roed and Lisbet Nypan, known as *signeri*, played a role in the vast majority of Norway's 263 documented witch trials. In trial after trial, accused 'witches' came forward and freely testified about their healing methods, telling about the salves they made and the *bønner* (prayers) they read over them to enhance their potency.

Hoggard, Brian (2004). "The archaeology of counter-witchcraft and popular magic", in *Beyond the Witch Trials: Witchcraft and Magic in Enlightenment Europe*, Manchester University Press. p. 167[ISBN missing]

Tyner, James A. (3 July 2025). "'The Devil Came to Me and Bid Me Serve Him': A Feminist Legal Geography of the 1692 Salem Witch Trials". *GeoHumanities*. 11 (2): 347–367. doi:10.1080/2373566X.2025.2496651. ISSN 2373-566X.

Witchcraft in 17th century Iceland, 2 February 2019

Hutton (2017), p. 15.

Pócs (1999), pp. 9–10.

Pearlman, Jonathan (11 April 2013). "Papua New Guinea urged to halt witchcraft violence after latest 'sorcery' case". *The Telegraph*. London, England: Telegraph Media Group. Archived from the original on 11 February 2018. Retrieved 5 April 2018.

Ankarloo & Clark (2001), p. [page needed].

"Saudi woman beheaded for 'witchcraft and sorcery'". CNN. 13 December 2011.

Archived from the original on 21 May 2020. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

"Saudi man executed for 'witchcraft and sorcery'". BBC News. Bbc.com. 19 June 2012. Archived from the original on 30 May 2019. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

di Giovanni, Janine (14 October 2014). "When It Comes to Beheadings, ISIS Has Nothing Over Saudi Arabia". Newsweek. Archived from the original on 16 October 2014. Retrieved 17 October 2014.

"A Global Issue that Demands Action" (PDF). the Academic Council on the United Nations System (ACUNS) Vienna Liaison Office. 2013. Archived (PDF) from the original on 30 June 2014. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

Diwan, Mohammed (1 July 2004). "Conflict between State Legal Norms and Norms Underlying Popular Beliefs: Witchcraft in Africa as a Case Study". *Duke Journal of Comparative & International Law*. 14 (2): 351–388. Archived from the original on 25 February 2021. Retrieved 28 March 2021.

Witch Hunts in Modern South Africa: An Under-represented Facet of Gender-based Violence (PDF). MRC-UNISA Crime, Violence and Injury Lead Programm. 2009. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.694.6630. Archived from the original (PDF) on 25 April 2012. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

"Nepal: Witchcraft as a Superstition and a form of violence against women in Nepal". Humanrights.asia. Asian Human Rights Commission. Archived from the original on 25 June 2014. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

Adinkrah, Mensah (April 2004). "Witchcraft Accusations and Female Homicide Victimization in Contemporary Ghana". *Violence Against Women*. 10 (4): 325–356. doi:10.1177/1077801204263419. S2CID 146650565.

"World Report on Violence and Health" (PDF). World Health Organization. Archived (PDF) from the original on 24 January 2014. Retrieved 7 June 2014.

Bussien, Nathaly et al. 2011. Breaking the spell: Responding to witchcraft accusations against children, in *New Issues in refugee Research* (197). Geneva, Switzerland: UNHCR

Cimpric, Aleksandra 2010. Children accused of witchcraft, An anthropological study of contemporary practices in Africa. Dakar, Senegal: UNICEF WCARO

Molina, Javier Aguilar 2006. "The Invention of Child Witches in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Social cleansing, religious commerce and the difficulties of being a parent in an urban culture". London: Save the Children

Human Rights Watch 2006. Children in the DRC. Human Rights Watch report, 18 (2) "Witchcraft murder: Couple jailed for Kristy Bamu killing". BBC News. Bbc.co.uk. 5 March 2012. Archived from the original on 8 April 2014. Retrieved 8 June 2014.

Dangerfield, Andy (1 March 2012). "Government urged to tackle 'witchcraft belief' child abuse". BBC News. Bbc.co.uk. Archived from the original on 8 October 2014. Retrieved 8 June 2014.

Hutton (2017), p. 49–50.

Reiner (1995), p. 97.

Abusch (2002), p. 65–66.

Abusch, Tzvi (2015). *The Witchcraft Series Maqlû. Writings from the Ancient World*. Vol. 37. SBL Press. p. 5. ISBN 978-1-62837-082-9.

Abusch (2002), p. 15–16.

Sanhedrin 67b

"Catholic Encyclopedia: Witchcraft". Newadvent.org. 1 October 1912. Archived from the original on 11 February 2021. Retrieved 31 October 2013.

Green, Kayla. "The Golem in the Attic". Archived 25 August 2017 at the Wayback Machine Moment. 1 February 2011. 25 August 2017.

Bilefsky, Dan (10 May 2009). "Hard Times Give New Life to Prague's Golem". The New York Times. Archived from the original on 9 May 2013. Retrieved 19 March 2013.

According to Czech legend, the Golem was fashioned from clay and brought to life by a rabbi to protect Prague's 16th-century ghetto from persecution, and is said to be called forth in times of crisis. True to form, he is once again experiencing a revival, and in this commercial age, has spawned a one-monster industry.

Russell, Jeffrey Burton. "Witchcraft". Britannica.com. Archived from the original on 10 May 2013. Retrieved 29 June 2013.

Pócs (1999), pp. 9–12.

Gibbons, Jenny (1998) "Recent Developments in the Study of the Great European Witch Hunt" in *The Pomegranate* Archived 2009-01-26 at the Wayback Machine #5, Lammas 1998.

Barstow, Anne Llewellyn (1994). *Witchcraze: A New History of the European Witch Hunts*. San Francisco: Pandora. ISBN 978-0-06-250049-6.

McNeill, F. Marian (1957). *The Silver Bough: A Four Volume Study of the National and Local Festivals of Scotland*. Vol. 1. Edinburgh: Canongate Books. ISBN 978-0-86241-231-9.

Sinclair, George (1871). *Satan's Invisible World Discovered*. Edinburgh.

Campbell, Heather M., ed. (2011). *The Emergence of Modern Europe: c. 1500 to 1788*. Britannica Educational Publishing. p. 27. ISBN 978-1-61530-343-4. Archived from the original on 26 January 2021. Retrieved 29 June 2013.

Jolly, Karen; Raudvere, Catharina; Peters, Edward (2002). *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: The Middle Ages*. New York: A&C Black. p. 241. ISBN 978-0-485-89003-7. In 1538 the Spanish Inquisition cautioned its members not to believe everything the Malleus said, even when it presented apparently firm evidence.

"History of Witches". History.com. 20 October 2020. Retrieved 26 October 2021.

Savage-Smith, Emilie (2004). *Magic and Divination in Early Islam*. Ashgate/Variorum. ISBN 978-0-86078-715-0. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 25 August 2020.

Khaldûn, Ibn (2015). *The Muqaddimah: An Introduction to History* (Abridged ed.). Princeton University Press. p. 578. ISBN 978-0-691-16628-5. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 4 May 2021.

Savage-Smith, Emilie, ed. *Magic and divination in early Islam*. Routledge, 2021. p. 87
Ronald Hutton, *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*, Oxford University Press, 2001, p. 192.

Adler (2006), pp. 45–47, 84–85.

Hutton (2017), p. 121.

Rose, Elliot (1962). *A Razor for a Goat*. University of Toronto Press.

Hutton, Ronald (1993). *The Pagan Religions of the Ancient British Isles*. Cambridge, Mass.: Blackwell Publishers.

Hutton (1999).

Hutton (1999), pp. 205–252.

Kelly, A. A. (1991). *Crafting the Art of Magic, Book I: a History of Modern Witchcraft, 1939–1964*. Minnesota: Llewellyn Publications.[ISBN missing]

Valiente, D. (1989). *The Rebirth of Witchcraft*. London: Robert Hale. pp. 35–62.[ISBN missing]

Gershman, Boris (23 November 2022). "Witchcraft beliefs around the world: An exploratory analysis". *PLOS ONE*. 17 (11) e0276872. Bibcode:2022PLoSO..1776872G. doi:10.1371/journal.pone.0276872. PMC 9683553. PMID 36417350.

"Witchcraft beliefs are widespread, highly variable around the world". Public Library of Science via phys.org. Retrieved 17 December 2022.

Okeja, Uchenna (2011). 'An African Context of the Belief in Witchcraft and Magic,' in *Rational Magic*. Fisher Imprints. ISBN 978-1-84888-061-0.[page needed]

Geschiere, Peter (1997). *The Modernity of Witchcraft: Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. Translated by Peter Geschiere and Janet Roitman. University of Virginia Press. p. 13. ISBN 0-8139-1703-4.

Igwe, Leo (September–October 2020). "Accused Witches Burned, Killed in Nigeria". *Skeptical Inquirer*. Amherst, New York: Center for Inquiry.

"The dangers of witchcraft". Archived from the original on 12 March 2010. Retrieved 26 March 2010.

"Kolwezi: Accused of witchcraft by parents and churches, children in the Democratic Republic of Congo are being rescued by Christian activists". *Christianity Today*. September 2009. Archived from the original on 14 November 2011. Retrieved 14 October 2011.

Whitaker, Kati (September 2012). "Ghana witch camps: Widows' lives in exile". *BBC News*. Archived from the original on 20 October 2018. Retrieved 1 September 2012.

Kanina, Wangui (21 May 2008). "Mob burns to death 11 Kenyan 'witches'". *Reuters*. Archived from the original on 20 June 2017. Retrieved 15 September 2016.

Byrne, Carrie 2011. "Hunting the vulnerable: Witchcraft and the law in Malawi"; *Consultancy Africa Intelligence* (16 June):

"Stepping Stones Nigeria 2007. Supporting Victims of Witchcraft Abuse and Street Children in Nigeria". *humantrafficking.org*. Archived from the original on 17 October 2012.

West, Harry G. *Ethnographic Sorcery* (p. 24); 2007. The University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-0226893983 (pbk.).

Cumes, David (2004). *Africa in my bones*. Claremont: New Africa Books. p. 14. ISBN 978-0-86486-556-4.

Kielburger, Craig; Kielburger, Marc (18 February 2008). "HIV in Africa: Distinguishing disease from witchcraft". *Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ontario: Toronto Star Newspapers Ltd. Archived from the original on 19 October 2017. Retrieved 18 September 2017.

"Ebola outbreak: 'Witchcraft' hampering treatment, says doctor". *BBC News*. London: BBC. 2 August 2014. Archived from the original on 18 July 2021. Retrieved 22 June 2018. citing a doctor from Médecins Sans Frontières: 'A widespread belief in witchcraft is hampering efforts to halt the Ebola virus from spreading'

"Social stigma as an epidemiological determinant for leprosy elimination in Cameroon".

Journal of Public Health in Africa. Archived from the original on 31 July 2017. Retrieved 27 August 2014.

Akosua, Adu (3 September 2014). "Ebola: Human Rights Group Warns Disease Is Not Caused By Witchcraft". The Ghana-Italy News. Archived from the original on 3 September 2014. Retrieved 31 October 2017.

Breslaw, E. G. (2011). "Witchcraft in Early North America". *Journal of American History*. p. 504. doi:10.1093/jahist/jar254. {{cite web}}: Missing or empty |url= (help)

Berger, Helen A., ed. (2005). *Witchcraft and Magic: Contemporary North America*. University of Pennsylvania Press. ISBN 978-0-8122-1971-5.

Kilpatrick, Alan (1998). *The Night Has a Naked Soul – Witchcraft and Sorcery Among the Western Cherokee*. Syracuse University Press.

Geertz, Armin W. (Summer 2011). "Hopi Indian Witchcraft and Healing: On Good, Evil, and Gossip". *American Indian Quarterly*. 35 (3): 372–393.

doi:10.1353/aiq.2011.a447052. ISSN 0095-182X. OCLC 659388380. PMID 22069814. To the Hopis, witches or evil-hearted persons deliberately try to destroy social harmony by sowing discontent, doubt, and criticism through evil gossip as well as by actively combating medicine men. ... Admitting [he practiced witchcraft] could cost him his life and occult power

Simmons, Marc (1980). *Witchcraft in the Southwest: Spanish and Indian Supernaturalism on the Rio Grande*. University of Nebraska Press. ISBN 978-0-8032-9116-4.

Wall, Leon and William Morgan, *Navajo-English Dictionary*. Hippocrene Books, New York, 1998. ISBN 0781802474.

Wallace, Dale Lancaster (January 2015). "Rethinking religion, magic and witchcraft in South Africa: From colonial coherence to postcolonial conundrum". *Journal for the Study of Religion*. 28 (1): 23–51. Retrieved 15 September 2023 – via Acaemdia.edu.

Bachmann, Judith (2021). "African Witchcraft and Religion among the Yoruba: Translation as Demarcation Practice within a Global Religious History". *Method & Theory in the Study of Religion*. 33 (3–4): 381–409. doi:10.1163/15700682-12341522. S2CID 240055921.

Silverblatt, I. (1983). "The evolution of witchcraft and the meaning of healing in colonial Andean society". *Culture, Medicine and Psychiatry*. 7 (4): 413–427. doi:10.1007/BF00052240. PMID 6362989. S2CID 23596915.

Behar, Ruth (1987). "Sex and Sin, Witchcraft and the Devil in Late-Colonial Mexico". *American Ethnologist*. 14 (1): 34–54. doi:10.1525/ae.1987.14.1.02a00030. hdl:2027.42/136539. JSTOR 645632.

Lavrin, Asunción. *Sexuality and Marriage in Colonial Latin America*. Reprint ed. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992, p. 192.[ISBN missing]

Lewis, Laura A. *Hall of mirrors: power, witchcraft, and caste in colonial Mexico*. Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2003, p. 13.[ISBN missing]

(in Portuguese) João Ribeiro Júnior, *O Que é Magia*, pp. 48–49, Ed. Abril Cultural. [ISBN missing]

Herrera-Sobek (2012), p. 174.

Herrera-Sobek (2012), p. 175.

Blom, Jan Dirk; Poulina, Igmar T.; van Gellecum, Trevor L.; Hoek, Hans W. (December

2015). "Traditional healing practices originating in Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao: A review of the literature on psychiatry and Brua". *Transcultural Psychiatry*. 52 (6): 840–860. doi:10.1177/1363461515589709. PMID 26062555. S2CID 27804741.

Hutton (2017), pp. 47–54.

Hutton (2017), pp. 50–51.

Hutton (2017), pp. 51–52.

Dickie, Matthew (2003). *Magic and Magicians in the Greco-Roman World*. Routledge. pp. 138–142.

Hutton (2017), pp. 59–66.

Ehrenreich & English (2010), pp. 29, 54.

The Oxford companion to Scottish history. pp. 644–645. ISBN 0-19-211696-7.

Cartwright, Kent (8 March 2010), *Witchcraft in Tudor and Stuart Scotland*, Wiley, p. 32, ISBN 978-1-4051-5477-2

Zguta, Russell (1977). "Witchcraft Trials in Seventeenth-Century Russia". *The American Historical Review*. 82 (5): 1187–1207. doi:10.2307/1856344. ISSN 0002-8762. JSTOR 1856344. PMID 11610147.

Gill, W. Wyatt (1876). *Myths and Songs from the South Pacific*. London: Henry S. King.

Sissons, Jeffrey (2005). *First Peoples: Indigenous Cultures and Their Futures*. Reaktion Books. p. 107. ISBN 978-1-86189-241-6.

"Papua New Guinea's Sorcery Killings: What's Behind the Violence?". BBC News. 20 February 2013.

"Witch-hunt Claims 50 in PNG Highlands". *The National*. Papua New Guinea. 2008.

Eves, Richard (2010). "Witchcraft Accusations, Social Relations and Power in Papua New Guinea" (PDF). *Crawford School of Public Policy Discussion Paper Series*. 98: 1–24.

Simons, Patricia (September 2014). "The Incubus and Italian Renaissance art". *Source: Notes in the History of Art*. 34 (1): 1–8. doi:10.1086/sou.34.1.23882368. JSTOR 23882368. S2CID 191376143.

Hutton, Ronald (16 March 2018). "Witches and Cunning Folk in British Literature 1800–1940". *Preternature: Critical and Historical Studies on the Preternatural*. 7 (1): 27. doi:10.5325/preternature.7.1.0027. hdl:1983/c91bdc34-80d8-49f6-92df-9147f2bef535. ISSN 2161-2188. S2CID 194795666. Archived from the original on 18 May 2021. Retrieved 18 May 2021.

Works cited

Abusch, Tzvi (2002). *Mesopotamian Witchcraft: Toward a History and Understanding of Babylonian Witchcraft Beliefs and Literature*. Brill Styx. ISBN 978-90-04-12387-8.

Adler, Margot (2006). *Drawing Down the Moon: Witches, Druids, Goddess-Worshippers, and Other Pagans in America Today*. New York: Penguin Books. OCLC 515560.

Ankarloo, Bengt; Clark, Stuart (2001). *Witchcraft and Magic in Europe: Biblical and Pagan Societies*. Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Philadelphia Press. ISBN 978-0-8264-8606-6.

Buse, Jasper (1995). *Cook Islands Maori Dictionary*. Cook Islands Ministry of Education. ISBN 978-0-7286-0230-4.

Cusack, Carole M. (2009). "The Return of the Goddess: Mythology, Witchcraft and Feminist Spirituality". In Pizza, Murphy; Lewis, James (eds.). *Handbook of*

Contemporary Paganism. Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-16373-7.

Davies, Owen (2003). *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*. London: Hambledon Continuum. ISBN 978-1-85285-297-9.

Ehrenreich, Barbara; English, Deirdre (2010). *Witches, Midwives & Nurses: A History of Women Healers* (2nd ed.). New York: Feminist Press at CUNY. ISBN 978-1-55861-690-5.

Herrera-Sobek, María (2012). *Celebrating Latino Folklore: An Encyclopedia of Cultural Traditions*. ABC-CLIO. ISBN 978-0-313-34339-1.

Hutton, Ronald (1999). *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-820744-3.

Hutton, Ronald (2017). *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present*. Yale University Press.

Levack, Brian (2013). *The Oxford Handbook of Witchcraft in Early Modern Europe and Colonial America*. Oxford University Press.

Pócs, É. (1999). *Between the Living and the Dead: A Perspective on Witches and Seers in the Early Modern Age*. Hungary: Central European University Press. ISBN 978-963-9116-19-1.

Reiner, E. (1995). *Astral Magic in Babylonia*. Philadelphia: American Philosophical Society. ISBN 978-0-87169-854-4.

Thomas, Keith (1997). *Religion and the Decline of Magic*. Oxford, England: Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-297-00220-8.

Wilby, Emma (2005). *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic*. Sussex Academic Press. ISBN 978-1-84519-079-8.

Willis, Deborah (2018). *Malevolent Nurture: Witch-Hunting and Maternal Power in Early Modern England*. Cornell University Press.

Further reading

Bailey, M. D. (2010). *Battling Demons: Witchcraft, Heresy, and Reform in the Late Middle Ages*. Pennsylvania State University Press.

Bosworth, Joseph (1991) [1882]. Toller, T. Northcote (ed.). *An Anglo-Saxon dictionary, based on the manuscript collections of the late Joseph Bosworth*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Chardonens, László Sándor (2007). *Anglo-Saxon Prognostics, 900–1100: Study and Texts*. Leiden: Brill. ISBN 978-90-04-15829-0.

Davies, Owen, ed. (2023). *The Oxford History of Witchcraft and Magic*. Oxford University Press. ISBN 978-0-19-288405-3.

Epstein, I. (2008). *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Children's Issues Worldwide*. Greenwood Press. ISBN 978-0-313-05559-1.

Ginzburg, Carlo (1983) [1966]. *The Night Battles: Witchcraft and Agrarian Cults in the Sixteenth and Seventeenth Centuries*. Translated by Tedeschi, John; Tedeschi, Anne. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. ISBN 978-0-8018-4386-0.

Ginzburg, Carlo (2004) [1989]. *Ecstasies: Deciphering the Witches' Sabbath*. Translated by Raymond Rosenthal. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-0-226-29693-7.

Gill, William Wyatt (1892). "Wizards". *The South Pacific and New Guinea, Past and Present*. Sydney: Charles Potter, Government Printer.

Hutton, R. (2006). *Witches, Druids and King Arthur*. Bloomsbury Academic. ISBN 978-1-85285-555-0.

Kent, Elizabeth (2005). "Masculinity and Male Witches in Old and New England". *History Workshop*. 60: 69–92. doi:10.1093/hwj/dbi034.

Lima, R. (2005). *Stages of Evil: Occultism in Western Theater and Drama*. University Press of Kentucky. ISBN 978-0-8131-2362-2.

Lühr, R. (1988). *Expressivität und Lautgesetz im Germanischen* (in German).

Heidelberg: Winter. ISBN 978-3-533-03864-1.

North, Richard (1997). *Heathen Gods in Old English Literature*. Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Rasbold, K. (2019). *Crossroads of Conjure: The Roots and Practices of Granny Magic, Hoodoo, Brujería, and Curanderismo*. Llewellyn Worldwide. ISBN 978-0-7387-5824-4.

Ruickbie, Leo (2004). *Witchcraft out of the Shadows: A History*. London: Robert Hale. ISBN 978-0-7090-7567-7.

Williams, Howard (1865). *The Superstitions of Witchcraft*. London: Longman, Green, Longman, Roberts, & Green – via Project Gutenberg.

External links

Wikiquote has quotations related to Witchcraft.

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Witchcraft.

Wikisource has the text of the 1911 Encyclopædia Britannica article "Witchcraft".

logo

Scholia has a topic profile for Witchcraft.

Witchcraft on In Our Time at the BBC

Kabbalah On Witchcraft – A Jewish view (Audio) chabad.org

vte

Magic and witchcraft

vte

Magic and witchcraft in Britain

vte

Fantasy fiction

vte

Horror fiction

vte

Paganism (and modern paganism)

Categories: WitchcraftHistory of magicIncubiMagic (supernatural)Religious controversiesSociology of religionSuperstitionsRomani religion

This page was last edited on 8 December 2025, at 15:48 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)
Wikimedia Foundation
Powered by MediaWiki
[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)
[Accessibility feedback](#)
Seasonal Holidays 2025
folk magick

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Images](#)

[Videos](#)

[Shopping](#)

[Short videos](#)

[Forums](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[AI Overview](#)

Folk magic is practical, community-based spiritual work using simple, accessible methods like herbs, stones, prayers, and charms to solve everyday problems like healing, luck, finding things, or protection, rooted in local traditions (like Appalachian "granny magic," Hoodoo, or European "cunning folk") often blending indigenous knowledge with Christian or other beliefs, focusing on natural connections rather than formal doctrine. It's about personal intention, intuition, and using what's at hand, forming the foundation for many modern witchcraft and pagan practices.

Key Characteristics

Practicality: Solves immediate needs (healing, love, luck, protection).

Accessibility: Uses common, natural items like plants, water, rocks, and household objects.

Cultural Roots: Draws from specific regional traditions (e.g., Appalachian, Hoodoo, Celtic).

Intuitive: Relies heavily on personal connection and intent, often passed down through families.

Syncretism: Blends indigenous, European, and African beliefs (e.g., Native plants with Christian prayers).

Examples of Practices & Traditions

Cunning Folk: European practitioners offering healing, divination, and protection.

Hoodoo/Conjure: African American tradition using roots, herbs, and spiritual practices.

Appalachian/Granny Magic: Blends Native American, European, and African traditions using local plants.

Kitchen Witchery: Magic focused on the home and hearth.

Folk Magic vs. Other Systems

Simpler Tools: Less emphasis on elaborate rituals, wands, or specific degrees, focusing on necessity and nature.

Foundation: Provides historical context and methods that inform modern witchcraft, Wicca, and Paganism.

Types of Folk Magic - Learn Religions

Folk magic is generally of a practical nature, meant to address the common ills of the community: healing the sick, bringing love ...

Learn Religions

Appalachian Folk Magic: Generations of “Granny Witchcraft” and Spiritual Work | Folklife Magazine

Appalachian folk magic, also known as granny magic, kitchen witchery, and Braucherei, is a tradition that uses native plants to he...

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

Appalachian Folk Magick: EP: 2 If y'all are trying to learn about some of the ...

Appalachian folk magic originated from a combination of different cultures. The Native Americans, the first inhabitants, possessed...

Reddit

Show all

Show more

Folk magic and witchcraft | What's the difference

Cailleachs Herbarium

<https://cailleachs-herbarium.com> › 2016/05 › folk-magi...

May 28, 2016 — Folk magic practitioners do based on Scottish cultural traditions do and how it differs from Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft, shamanism, Druidry etc.

People also ask

What's the difference between magick and magic?

What religion is folk magic?

What is the most powerful type of magic?

What are examples of folk beliefs?

Feedback

Folk Magick and how it operates : r/occult

Reddit · r/occult

30+ comments · 2 years ago

Folk magic refers to cultural sympathetic magic and superstition. Folk magic are things like nailing an iron nail above your passageways to ...

A few questions about folk magic : r/witchcraft - Reddit

10 posts

Jul 12, 2023

What is your 'folk-magic': magic used by everyday people

45 posts

Jun 6, 2025

More results from www.reddit.com

Appalachian Folk Magic: Generations of “Granny Witchcraft ...

Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage

<https://folklife.si.edu> › magazine › appalachian-folk-magic

Aug 15, 2023 — In the Appalachian Mountains, folk magic goes by many names: root work, granny magic, kitchen witchery, Braucherei, witchcraft.

What people are saying

Folk Magick in Galveston

Popular comment · Although I have no idea what any of this means, I wish you the best of luck on your endeavor.

.

30+ comments · 4 days ago

r/galveston

Reddit

The term “Folk magic” has a kind of hokey/disparaging/ silly air about it but it’s the best way to describe things like Kuji, especially as practiced by the common folk in the Edo era. Started as Taoist, got Shinto added to it, was initially used to forge invisible armor around yourself or waylay your enemies, before gradually becoming simplified until it evolved into a kind of cleansing magic to perform before writing spells or making talismans.

100+ likes · 2 weeks ago

shinobu_books · X

Japanese book translator & publisher

0:31

“Drawing on her heritage, Fahrún (@rueskitchen) shares her experiences with folk magic, as well as how she has adapted her practices because of necessity, availability, and accessibility. For example, she has aphantasia, meaning she cannot, or struggles to, picture things in her head, and visualization is a large part of folk magic. To make it easier for herself and others, she suggests writing it down in great detail, creating a vision board, or creating art about it. The author informs readers about useful objects and ingredients, explains how to identify and ward off the evil eye, and shares numerous other rituals. Her book also provides insight into building relationships with spirits and seeing the world in an enchanted way. It is easy to follow and understand, and it is also a practice that can be passed from person to person. This book is a guide, not an end-all, be-all directive on how to practice folk magic. Living Folk Magic is for anyone who is getting into or is curious about

50+ likes · 3 weeks ago

weiserbooks · Instagram
Spiritual books publisher

0:59

I'm sending a free set of this release to the first person who can guess 75% of the materia I'm using here. Drop a comment below! Hint: you can probably deduce a lot based off my last post! Cheers, Mahigan #traditionalwitchcraft #folkmagic #conjure #folkwitch #ceremonialmagick #witchesofinstagram #folkwitchcraft
350+ likes · 1 month ago

kitchentoad
Instagram

10:22

Fairy Magic at the Crossroads: Pagan Folklore & Cultural Connections
180+ views · 1 month ago

Moon Books Publishing · YouTube
Paganism publishing imprint

20:00

Exploring Austrian Folk Magic with Christian Brunner | The Witching Hour Join Patti as she welcomes Christian Brunner, a druid and author of 'Alpine Witchery,' to the Witching Hour. Discover the unique charms of Austrian folk magic, from the spells of the witch trials to modern adaptations. Christian shares the challenges of translating ancient spells, the sociological aspects of witch trials, and how traditional magic can be brought into contemporary practice. Learn about his personal journey from Catholicism to Druidry and get insights into his upcoming projects. Perfect for anyone interested in magical history and practical spellcraft! 00:00 Introduction to the Witching Hour 00:20 Meet Christian Brunner: The Druid and Author 00:31 Exploring Alpine Witchery 00:47 Historical Context and Translation Challenges 02:44 Folk Magic of the Austrian Alps 07:05 Christianity and Witchcraft 10:53 Social Status and Witch Trials 12:53 Practical Magic and Survival 13:28 Christi
10+ likes · 3 weeks ago

patti.negri · Instagram
Psychic medium & good witch

0:34

European folklore is rich in stories of witches flying, shapeshifting, and journeying to mythic realms. These folk tales are interwoven with the magical art of spirit flight, also

known as hedge-riding, hedge-crossing, or trance journeying. While traveling through the Otherworld in spirit form, witches can visit various realms to receive guidance from deities and other guides, meet and work with familiar spirits, hold meaningful rituals such as initiations, and acquire hidden knowledge of sigils, incantations, charms, and spells. In my self-guided course **Into the Otherworld**, you will explore the folklore and history of this magical art through a series of audio lessons, as well as practice spirit flight through four guided journeys. Details and registration through the link on my page @magebymoonlight. Begin any time you feel the call of the Otherworld #magebymoonlight #healthewitchwound #witchery #witchcraft #traditional
490+ likes · Oct 1, 2025

magebymoonlight · Instagram
Witchcraft enthusiast & author
Types of Folk Magic

Learn Religions

<https://www.learnreligions.com> › ... › Overview

May 8, 2019 — Folk magic is generally of a practical nature, meant to address the common ills of the community: healing the sick, bringing love or luck, driving away evil ...

Videos

How to Create A Folk Magic Practice Beginner Folk Witchcraft

YouTube · Lauren Moss

Aug 26, 2023

YouTube · Lauren Moss

22:09

I wanted to make this video to talk about the why and how you can craft your own tradition that relies on historical practice and your own intuition.

Folk Magick, Besoms and Y MabinogiBook Releases June

YouTube · HearthWitch

Jun 4, 2025

YouTube · HearthWitch

46:33

Today we're going to be talking about all of the witchcraft and pagan book releases for June 2025.

Folk Witchcraft and Traditional Witchcraft: What's the Difference?

YouTube · Ariana Carrasca, The Oak Witch

Feb 14, 2024

YouTube · Ariana Carrasca, The Oak Witch

15:37

Traditional witchcraft is more structured, ceremonial, and may be initiatory, while folk witchcraft is more individualistic, animistic, and focused on local customs and spirits.

Feedback

View all

Introduction to Witchcraft and Folk Magic Practices

Facebook · Spooky Souls

10+ comments · 1 year ago

A complex & personal practice, witchcraft is a method of folk magic, involving an in-depth knowledge of the natural world, the spiritual world ...

folk magick from www.facebook.com

Top answer:

You mean if I wanted truth, I'd go to church Hate to break it to you, but there is even ...

Folk Magic is For the People.

Chaotic Witch Aunt

<https://chaoticwitchaunt.com> › blogs › news › welcome-t...

Jan 13, 2025 — Folk magic is resistance. Whether you are reclaiming the magic of your ancestors, forging a new path, or finding the space in between, to ...

Cunning folk

Wikipedia

<https://en.wikipedia.org> › wiki › Cunning_folk

Cunning folk, also known as folk healers or wise folk, were practitioners of folk medicine, helpful folk magic and divination in Europe from the Middle Ages

American Folk Magick - RavenWolf, Silver: Books

Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com> › American-Folk-Magick-Silv...

The author of *To Ride a Silver Broomstick* and *Angels* discusses the charms, spells, and herbs of the Pennsylvania Dutch region with its influences from native ...

People also search for

Folk magick meaning

Types of folk magic

Folk magic spells

Folk magic vs witchcraft

Folk witchcraft

Folk Magic books

Appalachian folk magic

English folk magic

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)[Skip to content](#)

Cailleachs Herbarium White Logo

Cailleachs Herbarium

Exploring Scottish Folk Practices and Traditions

Shopping cart

\$0.00

Folk Practices

Films

Kin based medicine

community and custodianship

Events

About

Shop

ByScottOn28th May 2016InFolk Magic, Animism, folk, Folk Practices11 Comments

Folk magic, witchcraft, whats the difference ?

InFolk Magic, Animism, folk, Folk Practices11 CommentsRead Time16 mins

Home

Share your love

I get asked “what is a Folk Practitioner or what is folk magic?” on many occasions. I also get asked “what is the difference between what you do and what a witch does?”, “Is it witchcraft?”, “Are you religious?”, “Do you worship a lord and lady or speak to the de’il?”, “Do you follow the immanent and emanant mysteries of your gods?” and finally “Do you worship nature? Do you bang your drums and dance around?”

This is no fault of anyone. Folk practices have been adopted in a lot of modern magico-religious approaches. This has caused a lot of confusion when discussing what folk magic practitioners do based on Scottish cultural traditions do and how it differs from

Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft, shamanism, Druidry etc. In my mind, the difference is really rather big. I'm writing this as a "kind of" FAQ to help explore some of the differences and why they are important and to maybe help those who don't know. It's by no means exhaustive and I invite comment on these ideas from others.

First off, folk magic are practices of the people – the folk. Folk practices as you may imagine are very old. Very old and adaptable. Very much like people and their culture. Scottish folk practices have their roots far back in an older way of life. Scottish community and folk practices developed over time from the melting pot of Gaelic, Norse, Pictish, Angles, Norman and Saxon influences. All of these different influences had, and still do have, an impact on what folks did on a day to day basis. I have written about how Scottish tradition has been appropriated by pagan, druidic and witchcraft in another couple of posts. A story about it here and a more in depth examination of it here which provides some deeper context to what is to follow.

Whats also important to note is folk magic belong to all people. Each person had their way of interacting with the unseen world. Be it bakers, dairy workers, cloth makers, blacksmiths, fishermen, candle makers, brewers, cooks, domestic servants, any job you can imagine had a way of interacting with the otherworld. This is important to remember as folk magic is for everyone There were, and are, different ways for different people and everyone had a relationship with the other folk- the good folk and the animistic world view- for different reasons. This varied by person to person, village to village and district to district – so there was never only one version of it. This is different to some of the more authodoxisms in the occult and witchcraft communities. Yes, we did have specialist like the guid wife or the Fairy Dr etc, (some of these were disabled people) but they weren't as many. We also had folk magic practitioners like charmers who maybe were good at a certain thing but not the whole thing. So if anyone is telling you folk magic isn't for you politely tell them to fuck off.

Alexander Carmichael - the writer of the Carmina Gadelica and collector of scottish folk magic charms

Alexander Carmichael – the writer of the Carmina Gadelica

We are very lucky to find that a lot of this information has been preserved in literal format by folks such as Alexander Carmichael, Marion McNeil, Bates and Reginald Scott and others. Though this isn't without its own form of appropriation and harm. There is a huge collection of information that discusses seasonal practices, songs, prayers, festivals, celebrations and day to day things people believed in and carried out. One beautiful example of folk practice are the songs (known as a rann's) sung to plants before picking them, on awakening, reaping, seed sowing, sleeping etc.

So, how is this not Wicca, Traditional Witchcraft or Druidry et al? First off these are newer traditions druidry created from the antiquarian revival in the 1800's Wicca from the 1900's, traditional witchcraft from about the same time. All these worldviews have a tendency to be accompanied by a set of "beliefs" defined by their creators. Some witches are religious such as in Wicca with the Lord and lady. Others, such as Trad

witches may involve the Gnostic mystery's of lucifer or honour a spirit such as the Bucca and look at the seasonal wheel as different representations of this figure and involve themselves in the immanent and emanant mysteries. Druids believe in a variety of ideas but most experience a pantheon of gods and goddesses. All of these different traditions do borrow from Scottish folk magic and merge it into their systems in some way or another but again they are appropriating and borrowing from a devastated culture due to English imperialism and recreation it to suit there own understanding.

A most important fact

In our animistic culture – before the reformation witches were people who stole and used a community for their own ends. Scottish Folk practitioners disregarded witches and viewed them as evil. Think about it, in animistic cultures, like Scotland pre colonialism, folk worked together in community to provide for one another and had a collective way of life with no idea of private ownership. Any individual using magic to extract from that community, to feed their own egoistic, needs and not that of a collective good would have been a real issue to them. Our Scottish ancestors for this very reason would be greatly insulted by this appropriation and conflation of their way of life to that of a Witch. You can see this being born out in the witchcraft trials of the 16th century. The use of the word witch is a term given to our folk practices by imperial and religious abrahamic elites – seeking to demonise the people who practiced old beliefs and ways seen as popish. The ruling class demonising the working class in essence. Taking our way of life and turning it into something diabolic. The spirits they didn't want to assimilate, for example in holy wells and Lochs they turned into the devil himself or some other evil entity.

The defining difference in folk magic and witchcraft

The defining difference is folk practices aren't religiously based. Folk practitioners don't necessarily follow any god/goddess or they can, in fact, follow any religion such as Christianity, Catholicism, Islam etc. You don't need a particular set of "beliefs" or "faith" to be a folk practitioner. Folk magic approaches are syncretised with and can be developed from older and newer religious ideas we have. They were preserved in some ways though Christianised in surviving literature. In Scotland, the saints replaced local spirits of wells and hills and Christian/Catholic teachings were used to call on saintly figures whilst people maintained a belief in the fairy folks at the same time. At the same time spirits the church didn't like became known as folk de'ls or the folk devil. To me, it is an example of how the folk belief in animism ran alongside other religious ideas. Also a lot of our folk tales we draw from are stories of an aristocracy (theres a reason why we call the good folk the gentry) and the Tuatha De Dannan are all "royal" to a certain degree. – these aren't the stories of servants and farmers. Interestingly in our working class folk stories we have a lot of examples of where the spirit is more accessible and in the wild than these larger aristocratic tales where the spirit is part of the gentry and elite worship. However, in our folk magic spells we still call on these mighty names with barbarous words. However, exploring the class structure in witchcraft and folk magic helps put the folk back into folk lore and folk magic but this is a story for another day.

In my view, (and this should be acknowledged as my own lens of understanding as it now stands) Scottish folk practices link to animism. To Scottish folk practitioners, everything has a spirit. To me, this is consistently demonstrated by the collected information and the tales we have of the Daoine Síth (the good folk) that still prevail. Honouring these spirits and building relationships with them is the concern of folk magic practitioners like myself. I'd argue this equity conciseness or reciprocity or sacred hospitality should be the number one core belief of folk magic practitioners in Scotland linking it to solely Gaelic concepts like dùthchas.

We honour "otherworld folk" from our local area and maybe work with such ideas of the Slauch or the host of the dead. Once the relationship is developed or suitable "pacts" engineered, these spirits then choose to help in the ever so practical work of folk magic. This relational way of working also extends to the local land and plants that inhabit it. You seek the aid of the plant "spirit" by showing it respect and singing them particular songs etc. It is hoped by asking them to help it makes the herbal medicine or charm stronger. This means the power of this doesn't sit within you as an all might powerhouse but in the relationships you build and the community you have. There is less hierarchy in animism than in pantheons and it's funny to me how folk strive to turn everyone and everything into a god or goddess or deity level event.

Scottish folk magic and how it works

Scottish folk magic practitioners believe in the "otherworld" a place where their ancestors and "others" like the síth/sidhe and plant spirits inhabit. This otherworld isn't very far away, it's like it's just out of step with our own world. It's easily accessed at the liminal times such as dawn, dusk, midnight, Bealtainn and Samhuinn, and places such as fog, door steps, thresholds, on hills, near bogs and water and many other ways such as divination and techniques such as second sight etc. There is no veil in Scottish folk magic – the veil doesn't get thin. This is a Victorian idea.

Gaelic Plague Charm Scottish folk magic and witchcraft

Gaelic Plague Charm

Folk magic spells are created from plant leaves and roots, stones, water and lots of different things. For example, stones being used for healing, cloths tied to sacred wells for healing, wool spun and tied to people to effect a change, young children passed through Holy stones, Holy stones used as ways of seeing the other world, writing phrases, Rowan wood crosses, and red thread etc. The list of these charms is endless. They are as varied as the folk who use them.

Another characteristic of Scottish folk magic and practices is the lack of elaborate rituals, specific tools, times of day and clothing needed to get access to the practice. It's all pretty much straight forward and common sense stuff requiring no special gear. Over time, you may acquire some objects that start to hold special meaning but these are totally up to yourself; your spirits and your preferred way of working. Folk practices are an everyday occurrence and nothing requiring more work than a pointed finger or to circumambulate something three times can be very effective. Wicca and other magical

traditions use ceremonial magic techniques such as circle building, invoking and evoking various deities etc and most operate a grade system or have priests and priestesses or a magister or what have you. Folk practices don't have this elaboration or the same hierarchy – those who did this as a full time profession were either born or given the gift through trauma. I also find ceremonial magic when viewed through the lens of colonialism and through a folk magic perspective spiritually violent. That however, is more writing for another day.

Scottish folk magic and ancestry

Scottish folk magic also has its base in ancestry. A lot of Scottish people know their ancestry really well. Some can even trace their ancestry back to the Tuatha De Dannan and the Milesians etc. Ancestors are the only “outside help” called upon by some folk practitioners and this is clearly demonstrated in the ways Scottish folk construct their ranns (meaning runes or charms). In the construction of the rann someone's actions are always emulated. The phrase “as so and so healed this let me heal this” is very common and this structure is repeated in other ways. This is typical of Scottish Folk magic. Sometimes the “so and so” may be replaced with a figure linked to the thinking of the folk practitioner so here we get figures like Mary, St Michael or Thor other named spirits popping up.

Though there are many types of Scottish folk practitioner. Scottish Folk practices were carried out by everyone daily to some extent. Most folks had access to folk magic (piseógs) it was an everyday technology, I suppose a bit like having a phone these days everyone knew a little bit of something. Folk had to take their own “safety” from the machinations of witches and the Síth into their own hands. Today we might call them superstitions but these are commonly held beliefs we still have to this day. Crossing fingers and knocking on wood to help avert a bad outcome or offer protection are commonplace for good reason. If things got tricky, they would call in a specialists (like a wise woman or man or fairy doctor). Outside of the everyday occurrence of these activities, you have those who might also be healers, midwives, lykewakers or death midwives, spae-wives (fortune tellers), folk herbalists, diviners, fairy doctors, those with the second (or second hand sight) etc along with their everyday roles in the community. It's important to note not all folk practitioners would do these activities. Not all folk practitioners would be herbalists and diviners and spae-wives but maybe have a particular skill in a particular area; with limited skill in one form of divination as a way to contact the spirits.

Casting lots - Divination Scottish folk magic and witchcraft

Casting lots – Divination

Folk practitioners, would mostly divine through augury, lots and/or omens to see what is affecting those who came to see them. For example, the presenting issue was of “hill, water or kirk”. The clients who came to see them might have been “elf-shot” or otherwise affected by the síth or the malificarum of Witchcraft. Witches, to the folks on pre modern Scotland and to folk practitioners, were evil and responsible for a lot of harm. Before the reformation and the witchcraft trials Witches were seen as monstrous

things, but through the reformation folk practices like folk Catholicism came aligned with malificarum and, what I think, we get the conflation we have today. If witches or the Síth had caused the malady, or the folk practitioner was unable to effect a cure, they might suggest they go and see the wise woman or man or the area priest and the folk practitioner would pass them on, one of the first referral systems. This is because not all folk practitioners have the ability to manage illnesses that have their roots in the “doings” of the otherworld and in the evil of witchcraft. They might also refer them to the town priest for similar issues if the problem was one of faith.

In brief, a folk practitioner might hold one of these roles in their community and use folk magic ranns and spells to effect change for your community. You don't necessarily need to see “spirits” or into the otherworld, divine, use herbs, “cross” over into the otherworld, have an attending familiar and the nine yards of things at all. We all have different gifts and abilities. Some though who make this a full-time career will be able to and these would be the gifted minority (and a rare minority at that) who would be termed, fear/bean feasa – wise man or woman.

Folk magic and gifted specialists as compared to witchcraft

The only practitioners who have the ability to work with the sidhe and those inflicted by “elf-shot” were the wise people and fairy doctors and this was a profession they would undertake full-time but also along side their “day jobs” I guess. These people are few and far between and their gifts are given to them by their relationship with the good folk. The importance of the reciprocity or you may have heard me call it Equity consciousness cannot be understood. The good folk can also take their gifts away easily, sometimes quite dramatically such as removing an eye etc. Normally this may happen if the wise man or woman charged for using their gifts or for displeasing the good folk in another way. These good folk and the associated tales of figures who helped the wise man or woman, I think, represent the archetypal familiar stereotype we hear so much about in witchcraft circles these days. But as you can see the relationship is very different when looked through the eyes of Scottish folk practice. In Scottish folk practice, the síth is the one in power and control and the work is done in relationship with them. In Ceremonial Magic and some forms of witchcraft, the Witch holds the yoke over the spirit. Also to be a ceremonial magician you also need a strong faith in the Christian gods, and again I think a form of spiritual violence when used to command and threaten spirits in the way it's laid out.

Who you are as a folk practitioner is really decided by the community a folk practitioner lives in. In witchcraft its through initiation of self or in a coven. I have written about this before and you can find the link [here](#). But to summarise morality wasn't a question in folk magic. Folk practitioners would “work with both hands” to use a modern term i.e. they did what was needed to be done in support of the community they helped and supported. Also, let's bear in mind right and wrong are a of privilege of the wealthy and privileged in society. Sometimes people just had to do what they had to do to survive day to day. Following on from the older traditions people's reputations were earned. It's not my place to name myself “keeper of the stones” or “wise man” or any other

bombastic title. My title, and what reputation I have, is decided by my community.

I hope that this short discussion has been helpful to define some of the differences between these ideas. It's reassuring for me to see these approaches are being incorporated into contemporary life and practice. People are starting to once again re-explore their own roots and history. They are starting to become interested in exploring stereotypes of older times and reigniting relationships with the communities and the lands around them through foraging and herbalism. So who knows? It might mean that your local mechanic is a "car whisperer" and has an uncanny knack or "kenning" what is wrong with your car. Your Lollipop lady a gifted folk herbalist able to offer minor cures to those who pass her by, maybe your Local Policeman is divining the location of your stolen goods and people are putting up protective charms in their houses to protect themselves from threats both real and imagined from this world and the other.

Scott

[Previous Post](#)

[Foraging in May in Scottish Lothians](#)

[Next Post](#)

[An Fheill Sheathan, Midsummer, Johnsmass, summer solstice](#)

[Related Posts](#)

[The Sacred Circle of Home and Hearth](#)

[27th February 2025](#) 2 Comments

[Sacred Water : Journeys of Transformation and Personal Power in Scottish Folklore](#)

[8th November 2024](#) 3 Comments

[The Legacy of the Evil Eye in Scottish Folklore](#)

[1st October 2024](#) 4 Comments

[11 Comments](#)

[joanie reddinger](#)

[23rd June 2016 / 9:44 am](#)

[Reply](#)

would you say a "kitchen witch" could be a Folk Magic practitioner???.....as a young child Mom would tell me go play with the fairies...and to look for them under the violets and lily-of-the- valley's...her and my aunts used herbs to cure me...we use our finger instead of a wand....we had our superstitions etc...still do....I was cursed as a baby... and my Mom took the Hex off of me....you get the picture...Mom and my Aunts called it Blowing the Fire....not Witch Craft.....I grew up in a Pennsylvania Dutch Home.....it was different and fun.....now at 60 I look back and smile....and when I had to put a name on itso wicca friends would understand I used Kitchen Witch.....and I always was called a Witch...just never had to be Politically correct in this day and age....Thank You...I so enjoyed this writing,,,,,

[Cailleachs son](#)

[26th June 2016 / 11:13 am](#)

[Reply](#)

[Hey Joanie,](#)

Any person can use folk magic, any religion too, it's the idea behind its simple and accessible. In interest, folk magic became the "low magic" of witchcraft just as ceremonial and grimoire magic became the "high magic" of witchcraft and Wicca. What a lovely term "blowing the fire" why did they use this particular word and do you know where it came from it's very evocative. Im glad you like the post its great to get feedback from folks who have read it

Kai

3rd June 2017 / 12:08 pm

Reply

Hello! Very informative and well written article, much appreciated. May I point out one tiny error though? You say that folk magic practitioners can practice any religion, such as Christianity or Catholicism. Catholicism IS Christian. It isn't a "religion", it's a Christian denomination like Anglicanism or Methodism.

Cailleachs son

4th June 2017 / 11:58 am

Reply

Yes good point Kai, It all comes from a similar stream of religiousness. We call Catholicism the "old religion" in Scotland and to be there has always been more difference in the tradition than similarities but yes, thanks for pointing that out most helpful!

Cassandra Latham-Jones

7th September 2017 / 1:43 pm

Reply

Well observed and thought through article.

Cailleachs son

9th September 2017 / 9:35 pm

Reply

Thanks cassandra

Mark

18th October 2019 / 12:30 am

Reply

I found this and TBH most if not all of your articles and conversations very interesting. What would you suggest is the easiest or best way to learn and practice folk magic as you have described?

Kar L

19th October 2021 / 5:34 pm

Reply

Thank you for an informative post discussing the difference in great detail! I'm just in

confusion though. I had an awakening recently that I am a Green witch (work with botany, flowers, herbology, nature, Earth, stones and essential oils etc.) so I find it hard to understand how this type of witch and spiritual practice is different from that of folk magic. It seems very similar. I also love using crystals. I do believe all nature, animals and the Earth has a spirit so I get upset when I see a tree get cut down because I feel it's pain and screams. I'm an animal lover. I highly respect nature and Mother Earth, but I'm also Buddhist however and I believe in general spiritual beliefs outside of it too, like The Divine Spirits, Spirit Guides, Angels/Archangels and acknowledge and respect all other main religion Gods. I also have a love and fascination with fairies, woodland creatures, fae, any mythological creatures from any culture. I am in fact very complex, but I think it's having these many beliefs and interests that maybe I'm just a very versatile green witch and soul?

Lucy

4th November 2022 / 6:21 pm

Reply

This describes to the letter what I and my Grannies do here in Appalachia! We are not high priestesses and can be found in church on occasion. Also, the word witch is never ever mentioned. Thank you for putting into words what I could not!

carringtonshaw

1st May 2025 / 11:59 pm

Reply

This is so incredibly informative and answered so many questions I have as I'm starting my research! I read it through and knew I had to order your book immediately. Very excited to receive it today!

Scott Richardson-Read

2nd May 2025 / 11:39 am

Reply

Thanks so much for the kind words, and can't wait for the book to find its way to you

Leave a Reply

Your email address will not be published. Required fields are marked *

Name

*

Email

*

Website

Add Comment

*

[I accept the Privacy Policy](#)

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)

Stay informed and not overwhelmed, subscribe now!

Your email *

[I accept the Privacy Policy](#)

[Search](#)

[Information](#)

[Privacy Policy](#)

[Terms & Conditions](#)

[FAQ](#)

[Cailleachs Herbarium White Logo](#)

[All voices matter](#)

[Copyright © 2025 - Cailleachs Herbarium and Cailleachs Herbarium Publishing](#)

[HouseSkip to main contentAccessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Cunning Arts](#)

[AI Mode](#)

[All](#)

[Shopping](#)

[Images](#)

[Videos](#)

[Short videos](#)

[Maps](#)

[More](#)

[Tools](#)

[AI Overview](#)

[The Cunning Craft: A Tortuous Path of the Wise Art — Crossed ...](#)

"Cunning Arts" refers to historical and modern practices of folk magic, healing, and esoteric knowledge, often associated with "Cunning Folk" who used spells, remedies, and wisdom from both divine and darker sources, distinct from formal witchcraft but overlapping with occult philosophy, encompassing traditions of divination, herbalism, and cunning trickery found in European folklore and contemporary magical practice, explored in books like *The Cunning Craft*. It can also refer to specific modern shops, book titles, or even concepts in ancient texts like the *Kama Sutra*.

In folklore and history

Cunning Folk: Traditionally wise healers, diviners, and charm-workers in Britain and Europe, using practical magic for protection and cures, distinct from demon-focused witchcraft.

Historical Context: Early modern art and culture often depicted these figures as threats, but their practices involved folk charms, herbalism, and occult knowledge.

"Cunning" meaning: In older usage (like the Bible), "cunning" often meant "wise" or "skillful," not just deceitful, notes the International Standard Bible Encyclopedia and Collins Dictionary.

In modern occultism and literature

The Cunning Craft: A book by Nicholaj de Mattos Frisvold exploring these traditions, linking them to figures like Picatrix and Giordano Bruno, and embracing both healing and darker aspects.

Contemporary Practice: Modern practitioners, like those running The Cunning Arts Etsy shop, create magical tools from traditional woods, supporting animal rescue.

Academic Study: Scholars examine "Cunning Arts" as a historical concept, analyzing its link to sorcery, witchcraft, and secret knowledge.

In other contexts

Plato's Hippias Minor: Interpreted by some as an early exploration of "art as a form of wrongdoing" or cunning, notes Books & Books and Wikipedia.

Ancient Texts: In some traditions, "cunning arts" can refer to forms of deception or trickery, as found in texts like the Kama Sutra.

Cunning Folk: Witchcraft, Magic, and Occult Knowledge

Event Details: Cunning Folk considers magical practice, practitioners, and their persecution in early modern European artwork and ...

Stanford University

Cunning folk - Wikipedia

The name 'cunning folk' originally referred to folk-healers and magic-workers in Britain, but the name is now applied as an umbrel...

Wikipedia

Cunning arts: Significance and symbolism

Sep 30, 2024 — Cunning arts, as outlined in Kamashastra, encompass diverse forms of deceit and trickery emphasized in Muladeva's teac...

Wisdom Library

Show all

Show more

Cunning folk

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cunning_folk

Cunning folk, also known as folk healers or wise folk, were practitioners of folk medicine, helpful folk magic and divination in Europe from the Middle Ages

People also ask

What does cunning mean in the Bible?

What is cunning craft?

What is the symbol for cunning?

What does it mean if someone is cunning?

Feedback

Cunning arts: Significance and symbolism

Wisdom Library

<https://www.wisdomlib.org> › concept › cunning-arts

Oct 1, 2024 — Cunning arts, as outlined in Kamashastra, encompass diverse forms of deceit and trickery emphasized in Muladeva's teachings.

“Wicked Traditions” and “Cunning Arts”: Wise Men, Sorcery ...

BYU ScholarsArchive

<https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu> › cgi › viewcontent

PDF

by D Belnap · 2020 — “cunning arts,” which he employed to deceive the other members of the group visually in order to establish his own political authority.

Cunning Craft Foundation Course Series

Dr. Alexander Cummins

<http://www.alexandercummins.com> › talks › cunningcraft

A six-part course series exploring the history, techniques, documents, and practices of pre-modern British cunning-craft and folk magic.

\$300.00 · In stock

Faery Wicca, Book 2: The Shamanic Practices of ...

Amazon.com

<https://www.amazon.com> › Faery-Wicca-Book-Practice...

The Shamanic Practices of the Cunning Arts (The Ancient Oral Faery Tradition of Ireland) explore methods of meditation, including shapeshifting and seership,

The Cunning Craft: A Tortuous Path of the Wise Art

Buffalo Street Books

<https://buffalostreetbooks.com> › book

Feb 12, 2025 — The cunning ones, adept in magical arts and aided by denizens from beyond, serve as conduits between worlds, their rituals and rites steeped in ...

\$24.95 · 3–6 day delivery

Cunning Folk | Cantor Arts Center Exhibitions

Cantor Arts Center at Stanford University

<https://museum.stanford.edu> › exhibitions › cunning-folk

Cunning Folk considers magical practice, practitioners, and their persecution in early modern European artwork and material culture (c.1500–1750).

THE REAL WORLD ART OF CUNNING CRAFT by Shani ...

Miskatonic Books

<https://www.miskatonicbooks.com> › Shop

The real-world art of Cunning Craft: the magical thinking behind today's witch practice:

Cunning-craft in folklore and in the real lives of common people

\$65.00 · Out of stock

Cunning Magic & Celestial Art – Ltd 100 copies

Hell Fire Club Books

<https://hellfireclubbooks.com> › product › cunning-magi...

This important new study focuses on the origins of modern occultism in the 'Cunning Traditions' during the transitional period of English magic.

£63.00

Faery Wicca, Book 2: The Shamanic Practices of ...

eBay

<https://www.ebay.com> › itm

Faery Wicca, Book 2: The Shamanic Practices of the Cunning Arts (The Ancient Oral Faery Tradition of Ireland). Sku: EE505. Condition: Used: Excellent. Qty ...

\$166.96 · In stock · 5.0(2) · \$3.99 delivery · 14-day returns

People also search for

Cunning arts meaning

Cunning arts examples

Cunning Folk

Cunning woman

Cunning folk witchcraft

Cunning Folk book

Cunning folk meaning

Cunning craft

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization
72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address
- Update location
HelpSend feedbackPrivacyTerms
AI overview is ready

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate
Create account
Log in

Cunning folk

Article
Talk
Read
Edit
View history

Tools
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A model of a 19th-century cunning woman in her house, at the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic in Boscastle, England
Part of a series on
Witchcraft

By region
Modern movements
Related topics

Cunning folkFolk religionMagic BlackGreyWhiteMagic and religionShamanismWitch as an archetypeWitch-cult hypothesisWitch hunt in the early modern period
vte

Cunning folk, also known as folk healers or wise folk, were practitioners of folk medicine, helpful folk magic and divination in Europe from the Middle Ages until the 20th century. Their practices were known as the cunning craft. Their services also included thwarting witchcraft. Although some cunning folk were denounced as witches themselves, they made up a minority of those accused,[1] and the common people generally made a distinction between the two. The name 'cunning folk' originally referred to folk-healers and magic-workers in Britain, but the name is now applied as an umbrella term for similar people in other parts of Europe.[2][3]

European names
Names given to folk-healers and magic-workers in Europe include:

the Danish kloge folk ("wise folk") [2]
 the Dutch toverdokters ("magic-doctors") or duivelbanners ("devil-banners")
 the Finnish and Karelian tietäjät ("knowers")
 the French devins-guérisseurs ("soothsayer-healers") and leveurs de sorts ("curse-lifters")
 the German Hexenmeister ("witch masters") or Kräuterhexen ("herb witches")
 the Irish bean feasa ("woman of knowledge"), banfháidh or fáidhbhean ("seeress") [4]
 the Italian fattucchiere ("fixers"), guaritori ("healers"), benandanti ("good walkers") or Segnatori ("signers").
 the Portuguese curandeiros/as, benzedeiros/as ("blessers") or mulheres de virtude ("women of virtue")
 the Russian znakhar, [5] znatkiy, [6] vedun, [7] vedma [8] (k [9]) ("knower", "witch(er)")
 the Slavic vedmaki ("warlocks")
 the Spanish curanderos ("healers")
 the Swedish klok gumma ("wise old woman") or klok gubbe ("wise old man") [10] [11] [12] [13] [14]
 the Ukrainian znahar ("someone, who knows") [15]
 the Welsh dynion hysbys (from Welsh, meaning "cunning men")
 Scandinavia

The Swedish cunning woman Gertrud Ahlgren of Gotland (1782–1874), drawing by Pehr Arvid Säre 1870

In Scandinavia, the klok gumma ("wise woman") or klok gubbe ("wise man"), and collectively De kloka ("The Wise ones"), as they were known in Swedish, were usually elder members of the community who acted as folk healers and midwives as well as using folk magic such as magic rhymes. [16] In Denmark, they were called klog mand ("wise man") and klog kone ("wise woman") and collectively as kloge folk ("wise folk"). [17]

Many Norwegian [18] and Danish [18] [19] practitioners of folk magic and medicine would have a copy of the "Svartebok" (or "black book"), a tome that, according to some, was written by Cyprianus, that is, the Saint of Necromancers, Cyprian of Antioch, and to others to have been the Sixth and Seventh books of the Bible (or "Books of Moses" as the Pentateuch is known in Denmark and Norway) that were left out of the official Old Testament by the learned so that the common folk would not learn the knowledge held within the text. [18] A formulary found in a "black book" recovered from a farm near Elverum contains many formulas such as one for a toothache that commands the user of the charm to write the words "Agerin, Nagerin, Vagerin, Jagerin, Ipagerin, Sipia" on a piece of paper using a new pen, cut the paper into three small pieces, place the first piece onto the tooth in the evening and in the morning spit the piece into the fire. This should then be repeated with the other pieces. [20] Another charm used for helping a woman who is having a difficult labour says to take two white lily roots and give them to the mother to eat. [20]

There is an old idea that it was "Klok gumma" who often fell victim to the Witch Trials in the 17th century, but this does not appear to be true. However, some "wise women" and "wise men" were punished, not for witchcraft but often under the indictment point of "superstition" (Swedish: Vidskepelse).[16] In the 1670s, the wise man Johan Eriksson of Knutby was sentenced to seven gauntlet for "superstition", and again in the 1680s to nine.[16] Per Ericsson of Dalarna, who read the diseases in wine, was punished both in 1720 and 1726.[16] Brita Biörn of Gotland said in court that she learned to heal the sick when she spent some time in the underworld, and she was sentenced to prison terms in both 1722 and 1737.[16] The punishment of Sweden's "cunning folk" only seemed to have the opposite effect. Ericsson said that his clients had been coming in greater numbers after the rulings against him, and that he would be forced to hide if he was to obey the court and refrain from his practice, and in the Biörn case, the vicar complained that people from throughout the country came to seek her help, and relied on her as a god after her first sentence.[16] The sentences, in reality, had the effect of good advertising, and Brita's daughter and granddaughter's daughter were also healing women.[16]

There are many examples of well-known "cunning folk" who were known far beyond their village boundaries, such as Ingeborg i Mjårhult in the 18th century and Kisamor and Gota-Lena in the 19th century. In the 16th century, Brigitta Andersdotter was often hired by Queen Margaret Leijonhufvud. In Norway some women such as Mor Sæther (1793–1851), Anna Brandfjeld (1810–1905) and Valborg Valland (1821–1903) achieved national fame, unusual for women of the time.[21]

The customs persisted well into the 20th century, until the medical doctor became more accessible to the public.[11][12] In the 19th century, every neighbourhood in Norway had at least one folk-healer.[21] Such beliefs in folk-medicine, magic, and the use of "black books" were taken by migrants to the Americas. However, many beliefs died out in Norwegian-American communities around the 1920s with many not having knowledge of the subject or of the "black book". Knowledge of these beliefs did last longer in Norway, even if they were not commonly believed in by Norwegians.[18]

Britain

Main article: Cunning folk in Britain

Diorama of a cunning woman in the Museum of Witchcraft and Magic

The term "cunning man" or "cunning woman" was mostly used in England and Wales[22] from the early modern era onwards. They were also called "wizards", "wise men", "wise women", "conjurers"[22] or in Welsh "dyn(es) hysbys" (knowing man or woman).[23] In Cornwall they were sometimes called "pellars", which some etymologists suggest originated from the term "expellers", referring to the practice of expelling evil spirits.[22] The term "white witch" was rarely used before the 20th century,[24] as a "witch" generally referred to an evil person.[25]

In the Middle Ages, those who worked magic in Anglo-Saxon England were referred to

by several names.[26] Some of the spells and charms that had been used in Anglo-Saxon paganism continued to be used following Christianization. Historian Owen Davies noted, "although some such pre-Christian magic continued, to label it pagan is to misrepresent the people who used it and the context in which it was used." [27]

Some Christian clergy and secular authorities tried to smear the cunning folk by falsely branding them 'witches' and associating them with harmful 'witchcraft'. [28] However, there was no widespread persecution of them, largely because most common people firmly distinguished between the two: witches were seen as being harmful, and cunning folk as helpful. [29][30]

In the 15th and 16th centuries, there had been no attempt to ban the cunning craft, although private lawsuits had been brought against some cunning folk by clients who felt that they had been cheated out of their money. Under the Witchcraft Act 1541, a person could be executed for using magic or conjuration to harm others, to cast a love spell, or to find treasure. [31] This law was repealed no later than 1547, which Davies believes was due to those in power changing their opinion: they thought that either the death penalty was too harsh, or that magic was a moral issue that should be dealt with by the church rather than the state. [32]

For the following few decades, the magical practices of the cunning folk remained legal. In 1563, another law was passed against "Conjurations, Enchantments and Witchcrafts". This law was not as harsh as its predecessor, with the death penalty being reserved for those who were believed to have murdered someone by magical means. [33] This law had little effect on the cunning folk, as "the attention and focus of the courts shifted away from the activities of cunning-folk and towards the maleficium of supposed witches". [34] It was unusual for a cunning man or woman to be accused of witchcraft; in the county of Essex for instance, four hundred people had been put on trial for witchcraft, but only four of those were cunning folk. [35]

The Enlightenment saw a change in attitudes, especially amongst the educated elite. The 'Witchcraft Act 1735' repealed earlier laws against witchcraft. Unlike those laws, it did not accept the existence of magic or witches. Instead, anyone who claimed to use magic was to be punished as a swindler and could be imprisoned for one year. [36]

Germany

The belief in cunning folk and the use of "white magic" to be used for healing and as protection against "black magic" was once widespread in Germany; [37][38] however, during the early modern period such practices gradually became less accepted by the authorities, partly because the belief in "white magic" was viewed by the church authorities to be contrary to Biblical teachings and partly due to the loss of revenues for certain groups such as barber-surgeons and physicians, as was the case in Rothenburg ob der Tauber in which periodical action was taken against users of "white magic". The usual punishment was banishment rather than execution as was common for others convicted of witchcraft and the use of "black magic" [37]

In Germany practitioners of folk-magic were almost always female; however, by contrast the Hexenmeister (also a term for a warlock) or Hexenfinder[39] who hunted witches and "neutralised" them on behalf of society was always male.[40]

Ireland

Look up bean feasa in Wiktionary, the free dictionary.

In Ireland, names for the cunning folk in Irish include bean feasa ("wise woman"); banfháidh or fáidhbhean ("seeress");[41] or fear feasa ("wise man"). As in other countries, they provided services of magical healing, folk medicine, divination, and finding lost and stolen property.[42] It was believed they could cure illnesses in both humans and livestock that were caused by fairies or witches.[42] Their charms included a short rhyme or prayer referencing Jesus, Mary, or the saints. This was paired with a repetitive motion or ritual, and an object.[42] They also performed funeral tasks like preparing a body for a wake and keening over the body.[41] Gearoid Ó Cruailaich wrote that the bean feasa was also "an oracular authority for her community regarding the meaning and significance of experiences they fail to understand".[41][43] Biddy Early (1798–1872) was a famous Irish cunning-woman.[44][45]

Italy

The names used for cunning-folk in Italy vary from region to region, although such names include praticos (wise people), guaritori (healers), fattucchiere (fixers), donne che aiutano (women who help) and mago, maga or maghiardzha (sorcerers). At times, they were sometimes called streghe (witches), although usually only "behind their backs or by those who either are sceptical of their powers or believe they deal in black magic." [46] Unlike in other parts of Europe, such as Britain, the cunning profession survived the 20th century and into the early 21st, allowing Italian-American sociologist Sabina Magliocco to make a brief study of them (2009).[47]

As in the rest of Europe, the primary role of the Italian cunning-folk was apparently in healing, both through the use of herbs and through spiritual healing. The former required knowledge about various plants and herbs on the behalf of the cunning-person, although the spiritual healing was believed to come from an inner power, known as la forza (power), la virtù (virtue) or il Segno (the sign).[48] Such healing was often in the form of removing the malocchio, or evil eye, which had cursed someone.[49]

Italian cunning craft was, and continued to remain rooted in the country's Roman Catholicism, which is evident from the use of charms and prayers, which often call upon the aid of saints.[50] Such magical practitioners also widely believed that they dealt with spirit beings, both benevolent (who would aid them) and malevolent (whom they would have to combat). The latter included the unquiet dead as well as supernatural witches who were believed to cause harm to people, whilst the former included ancestors, the helpful dead and saints, who could help defeat these malevolent entities.[51] Magical tools were also utilised by Italian cunning-folk, and whilst these varied between both

regions and practitioners, these commonly include fiber ropes or cords to bind, knives or scissors to cut away illness, and mirrors and weapons to reflect or scare away malevolent spirits.[52]

In Italy, the folk-healing tradition known as Segnature is practised by rural segnatori and segnatrici, who employ ritual gestures - “signs” - alongside secret prayers to cure illness, remove curses such as the malocchio (evil eye), and influence natural phenomena. Drawing on oral transmission within families and community networks, Segnature exemplifies an enduring vernacular healing system rooted in pre-Christian animism but syncretised with Catholic symbolism. In her 2024 monograph *Italian Witchcraft and Shamanism: The Tradition of Segnature, Indigenous and Trans-cultural Shamanic Traditions in Italy*, Dr Angela Puca presents extensive ethnographic research demonstrating how these practices constitute a living form of indigenous Italian shamanism—systematised through gestures, verbal formulas, and initiation, and are experiencing renewed visibility through social media and contemporary spiritual frameworks. This positions Segnature as a coherent strand within Italy's cunning folk tradition, bridging folk Catholicism, ancestral healing, and modern esoteric sensibilities. [53][54]

Eastern Europe

Main article: Zagovory

Zagovory—the use of verbal incantations—arose from Slavic pagan prayers and incantations, whether spoken, whispered or sung. These incantations have been traditionally accompanied by associated rituals, some of which are, or were, physically demanding and strenuous. One example calls for the zagovory practitioner to have either a full set of teeth, or a knife as a symbolic substitute for teeth that were missing. [55]

The traditions survived into the Christian era, largely through a process of syncretism and Christianization of the traditional rites, in which images of, and lore about, Jesus were added to the existing traditions. For instance, a healing would now be done in the name of Jesus, citing a story from the Bible.[56][57]

Societal concern about the practice of witchcraft centered on whether someone was using incantations or rites to cause harm.[58] In one case of suspected witchcraft, investigators found a locked box containing something bundled in a kerchief and three paper packets, wrapped and tied, containing crushed grasses.[58] People in Russian and Ukrainian societies usually shunned those said to be witches, unless they felt they needed help against supernatural forces. Impotence, stomach pains, barrenness, hernias, abscesses, epileptic seizures, and convulsions were all attributed to evil (or witchcraft).[59] In Russia, three quarters of those accused of witchcraft were men.[58]

American

North and South America have had their own variants of these, which had taken on aspects of African and Native culture. While most of Latin America also uses Curandero/

Curandera, Appalachia had the Mountain Witches,[60] possibly taking their name from an attempt to label similar practices amongst the Amish as Witchcraft to persecute German immigrants in Appalachia in the 1700s. The Amish practitioners are generally referred to as Braucherei, and the concept is known to them as Pow-wow.[61] The Creole also have their own, Traiteurs.[62] Among the Gullah-Geechee of the Carolinas is a folk healing tradition within the Hoodoo religion known as rootwork that is a combination of African, Native and European beliefs. Such folk healers there are known as Conjure Doctors or Root Doctors. Archaeological discoveries also show folk magic being practiced amongst the English colonists, with archaeological discoveries of magical talismans such as Witch Bottles,[63] the tradition appearing to have continued up to, at least, the Civil War. All of the above traditional forms of folk magic practitioners continued within their respective communities into the 20th century, with many practices still alive and well.

See also

Cunning folk traditions and the Latter Day Saint movement

European witchcraft

Folk Christianity

Folk healer

Folk religion

Vedmak

Witch doctor

Wise Old Man and Wise Old Woman, a Jungian archetype

References

Citations

Hutton, Ronald (2017). *The Witch: A History of Fear, from Ancient Times to the Present*. Yale University Press. pp. 24–25.

Davies 2003. p. 163.

De Blécourt 1994.

"2) Aoibheall". *Theses.univ-lyon2.fr*. Retrieved 2022-09-15.

znakharka as to a woman

znatkaya as to a woman

veduniya as to a woman

as to a wooman

as to a man

"Swedish to English vocabulary list from Freedict".

Signum svenska kulturhistoria, Stormaktstiden

Jan-Inge Wall, *Hon var engång tagen under jorden*

Wicked arts: witchcraft and magic trials in southern Sweden, 1635–1754 By Per Sörlina

Witchcraft and magic in Europe: the 20th century by Marijke Gijswijt-Hofstra, Willem de Blécourt, Brian Levack, Ronald Hutton, Jean Sybil La Fontaine and Roy Porter, Continuum International Publishing Group, 1999, ISBN 978-0-485-89106-5[page needed]

Колодюк, І. "Сучасний стан поліського знахарства (за еспедиційними матеріалами на Поліссі)." *Волинь-Житомирщина* 13 (2005): 134-142.

Jacob Christenssen (Swedish): Signums svenska kulturhistoria. Stormaktstiden (Signum Swedish Culturhistory. The Great Power Era) (2005)

Healing by hand: manual medicine and bonesetting in global perspective Kathryn S. Oths, Servando Z. Hinojosa, Rowman Altamira, 2004, ISBN 0-7591-0393-3, ISBN 978-0-7591-0393-1. p. 5

Remedies and rituals: folk medicine in Norway and the New Land by Kathleen Stokker, Minnesota Historical Society, 2007, ISBN 0-87351-576-5, ISBN 978-0-87351-576-4. pp. 75–76

H.P. Hansen: Kloge Folk – Folkemedicin og overtro i Vestjylland (Rosenkilde og Bagger 1960)

Remedies and rituals: folk medicine in Norway and the New Land by Kathleen Stokker, Minnesota Historical Society, 2007, ISBN 0-87351-576-5, ISBN 978-0-87351-576-4. p. 78

Remedies and rituals: folk medicine in Norway and the New Land by Kathleen Stokker, Minnesota Historical Society, 2007, ISBN 0-87351-576-5, ISBN 978-0-87351-576-4. p. 23

Hutton 1999. p. 85.

Davies 2003. p. 184.

Davies 2003. p. xiii

Hutton 1999. p. 86.

Hutton 2009. p. 47.

Davies 2003. p. 185.

Hutton (2017), pp.x–xi

Davies 2003. pp. 7–13.

Grell, Ole Peter; Scribner, Robert W. (2002). Tolerance and Intolerance in the European Reformation. Cambridge University Press. p. 45. Not all the stereotypes created by elites were capable of popular reception [...] The most interesting example concerns cunning folk, whom secular and religious authorities consistently sought to associate with negative stereotypes of superstition or witchcraft. This proved no deterrent to their activities or to the positive evaluation in the popular mind of what they had to offer.

Davies 2003. p. 4.

Davies 2003. p. 5.

Davies 2003. p. 06-07.

Davies 2003. p. 7.

Davies 2003. p. 13.

Davies 2003. pp. 20–21.

Witchcraft narratives in Germany: Rothenburg 1561–1652 Alison Rowlands, Manchester University Press, 2003 ISBN 0-7190-5259-9, ISBN 978-0-7190-5259-0, pp. 72–73

Lucifer ascending: the occult in folklore and popular culture Bill Ellis, University Press of Kentucky, 2004, ISBN 0-8131-2289-9, ISBN 978-0-8131-2289-2

Beleg laut dem Deutschen Rechtswörterbuch in: Basler Jahrbuch 1935, Seite 41 und in: Hessische Geschichte und Landeskunde Heft 2, Band 48/1932, Seite 44

Lucifer ascending: the occult in folklore and popular culture Bill Ellis, University Press of Kentucky, 2004, ISBN 0-8131-2289-9, ISBN 978-0-8131-2289-2, p. 22

Ó Cruaíaoich, Gearóid (2005). "Reading the Bean Feasa". *Folklore*. 116 (1): 37–50. doi:10.1080/0015587052000337707. JSTOR 30035237. S2CID 161524481.

Ganiel, Gladys; Holmes, Andrew (2024). *The Oxford Handbook of Religion in Modern Ireland*. Oxford University Press. pp. 79–82.

"Discovering the Bean Feasa |". Archived from the original on 2020-04-06. Retrieved 2020-04-06.

Richardson, Bill (July 22, 2015). *Spatiality and Symbolic Expression: On the Links between Place and Culture*. Springer. ISBN 9781137488510 – via Google Books.

Smiddy, Richard (April 6, 1873). "An Essay on the Druids, the Ancient Churches and the Round Towers of Ireland". W.B. Kelly – via Google Books.

Magliocco 2009. p. 114.

Magliocco 2009.

Magliocco 2009. p.114-116.

Magliocco 2009. p.123.

Magliocco 2009. p. 104.

Magliocco 2009. pp. 117–118

Magliocco 2009. p. 120.

Angela Puca, *Italian Witchcraft and Shamanism: The Tradition of Segnature, Indigenous and Trans-cultural Shamanic Traditions in Italy* (Leiden: Brill, 2024).

"Italian Witchcraft and Shamanism: The Tradition of Segnature..." Brill (2024), p. 5–6.

Madlevskaya, Elena (2005). *Russkaya Mifologia. Entsiklopedia* (in Russian). Moscow: EKSMO. p. 562. ISBN 5-699-13535-9. OCLC 70216827.

Aleksandrov, Aleksei (1997). *777 Zagovorov I Zaklinanii Russkogo Naroda* (in Russian). Moscow: Lokid. pp. 204, 521. ISBN 5320002157.

Agapkina, Tatiana (2010). *Vostochnoslavyanskíe lechebnyezagovory v sravnitel'nom osveshchenii: Syuzhetika i obraz mira* (in Russian). Moscow. p. 366.

Kivelson, Valerie A. (July 2003). "Male Witches and Gendered Categories in Seventeenth-Century Russia". *Comparative Studies in Society and History*. 45 (3): 606–631. doi:10.1017/S0010417503000276. JSTOR 3879463. S2CID 145811691.

Worobec, Christine D. (1995). "Witchcraft Beliefs and Practices in Prerevolutionary Russian and Ukrainian Villages". *The Russian Review*. 54 (2): 165–187.

doi:10.2307/130913. JSTOR 130913.

"Appalachian Folk Magic: Generations of "Granny Witchcraft" and Spiritual Work".

Kriebel 2017: 341: "... the two characteristic forms of folk medical practice among Pennsylvania Germans-powwowing (known in the Pennsylvania German dialect as Braucherei, or Brauche) and herbal medicine. Some scholars would not distinguish the two, since powwowers have frequently employed plant substances as material components in spells and used herbal cures as an adjunct to their supernaturally based healing practice."

"Traiteuse". Wiktionary. 19 May 2022. Retrieved 3 August 2022.

Manning (2012), pp. 94–140

General and cited references

Chumbley, Andrew (2001). "The Leaper Between: An Historical Study of the Toad-bone Amulet; its forms, functions, and praxes in popular magic". *The Cauldron*.

Davies, Owen (2003). *Cunning-Folk: Popular Magic in English History*. London:

Hambledon Continuum. ISBN 1-85285-297-6.

De Blécourt, Willem (October 1994). "Witch Doctors, Soothsayers and Priests. On Cunning Folk in European Historiography and Tradition". *Social History*. 19 (3).

Hutton, Ronald (1999). *The Triumph of the Moon: A History of Modern Pagan Witchcraft*. New York: Oxford University Press. ISBN 0-19-820744-1.

Hutton, Ronald (2009). *Blood and Mistletoe: The History of the Druids in Britain*. New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press.

Magliocco, Sabina (2009). "Italian Cunning Craft: Some Preliminary Observations". *Journal for the Academic Study of Magic* 5. Oxford: Mandrake of Oxford.

Maple, Eric (December 1960). "The Witches of Canewdon". *Folklore*. 71 (4): 241–250. doi:10.1080/0015587X.1960.9717250.

Oates, Shani (2010). *Tubelo's Green Fire: Mythos, Ethos, Female, Male & Priestly Mysteries of the Clan of Tubal Cain*. Oxford: Mandrake of Oxford. ISBN 978-1-906958-07-7.

Semmens, Jason (2004). *The Witch of the West: Or, The Strange and Wonderful History of Thomasine Blight*. Plymouth. ISBN 0-9546839-0-0.

Thomas, Keith (1973). *Religion and the Decline of Magic: Studies in Popular Beliefs in 16th and 17th-Century England*. London: Penguin.

Wilby, Emma (2005). *Cunning Folk and Familiar Spirits: Shamanistic Visionary Traditions in Early Modern British Witchcraft and Magic*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press. ISBN 1-84519-078-5.

vte

Magic and witchcraft

Categories: Cunning folkEuropean folkloreEuropean witchcraftFolklore charactersHistorical health care occupationsHistory of magic

This page was last edited on 12 December 2025, at 10:05 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Nāga

Article

Talk
Read
Edit
View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

For the modern ethnic group, see Naga people. For other uses, see Naga (disambiguation).

Nāga

A nāga couple, featured as a Chennakeshava Temple relief

Devanagari नाग

Venerated in Hinduism, Buddhism

Abode Patala

Texts Mahabharata, Puranas

In various Asian religious traditions, the Nāgas (Sanskrit: नाग, romanized: Nāga)^[1] are a divine, or semi-divine, race of half-human, half-serpent beings that reside in the netherworld (Patala), and can occasionally take human or part-human form, or are so depicted in art. Furthermore, nāgas are also known as dragons and water spirits. A female nāga is called a Nagini (Hindi: Nagin). According to legend, they are the children of the sage Kashyapa and Kadru. Rituals devoted to these supernatural beings have been taking place throughout South Asia for at least 2,000 years.^[2] They are principally depicted in three forms: as entirely human with snakes on the heads and necks, as common serpents, or as half-human, half-snake beings in Hinduism and Buddhism.

Nagaraja is the title given to the king of the nāgas.^[3] Narratives of these beings hold cultural significance in the mythological traditions of many South Asian and Southeast Asian cultures, and within Hinduism and Buddhism. Communities such as the Nagavamshi, Khmer and Sri Lankan Tamils claim descent from this race.

Etymology

Wikispecies has information related to *Naja naja*.

In Sanskrit, a nāgá (नाग) is a snake, most often depicted by the Indian cobra (*Naja naja*). A synonym for nāgá is phaṇin (फणिन्). There are several words for "snake" in general, and one of the very commonly used ones is sarpá (सर्प). Sometimes the word nāgá is also used generically to mean "snake".^[4] The word is cognate with English 'snake', Germanic: *snēk-a-, Proto-IE: *(s)nēg-o- (with s-mobile).^[5]

Alternatively, an Indo-European etymology as a "hairless, naked animal"—cognate to English "naked"—would explain that the Sanskrit word nāga can also mean "cloud", "mountain" or "elephant".^[6]

Hinduism

Patanjali as Śeṣa.

Nāgas, as a serpent-shaped group of deities that often take form as cobras, are prominent in Hindu iconography, throughout Hindu texts (especially in the first book of the Mahābhārata) and in local folk traditions of worship.[7] In some regions of the Himalaya, nāgas are regarded as the divine rulers of the region — for example, in Kullu Valley, in Berinag and in the valley of the Pindar River, which is believed to be ruled by the ninefold Naiṇī Devī. Both in the Nilamata Purana of Kashmir and in the Swayambhu Purana of Kathmandu, the respective region begins its history as a lake, populated by nāgas, which is later drained.[8]

Ancient Sanskrit texts such as the Mahabharata, the Ramayana, and the Puranas describe the nāgas as a powerful, splendid and proud semi-divine species that can assume their physical form either as human (often with a halo of cobra hoods behind their head), as a partially human serpent, or as a whole serpent. Their domain is in the enchanted underworld, the underground realm filled with gems, gold and other earthly treasures called Naga-loka or Patala-loka. They are also often associated with bodies of waters—including rivers, lakes, seas, and wells—and are guardians of treasure.[9] Their power and venom make them potentially dangerous to humans. However, in Hindu mythology, they often take the role of benevolent protagonists: in the Samudra Manthana, Vasuki, a nagaraja who abides on Shiva's neck, became the churning rope for churning of the Ocean of Milk.[10] Their eternal archrival is the Garuḍa, the legendary semi-divine bird-like deity.[11]

Vishnu is originally portrayed in the form sheltered by Sheshanāga or reclining on Shesha, but the iconography has been extended to other deities as well. The serpent is a common feature in Ganesha iconography, and appears in many forms: around the neck,[12] use as a sacred thread (Sanskrit: yajñopavīta)[13] wrapped around the stomach as a belt, held in a hand, coiled at the ankles, or as a throne.[14] Shiva is often shown garlanded with a snake.[15] Maehle (2006: p. 297) states that "Patanjali is thought to be a manifestation of the serpent of eternity".

Part of a series on
Hinduism

Hindu Mythology

Origins

Sampradaya (traditions)

Deities

Concepts

Practices

Philosophical schools

Gurus, Rishi, philosophers

Texts

Hindu culture and society

Other topics

GlossaryOutline

Hinduism portal

vte

Folk traditions

In South India, termite hills are believed to be the dwelling place of female nagammas, [16][17][18] whereas Himalayan Nags and Naginis, such as Naiṇī Devī of Pindar Valley, are worshipped as underworld beings protecting water resources and the wellbeing of village and valley.[19][20]

Literature

See also: Shesha, Vasuki, and Manasa

The Mahabharata epic is the first text that introduces nāgas; it describes them in detail and narrates their stories.[21] The cosmic snake Shesha, the nagarajas (nāga kings) Vasuki, Takshaka, Airavata and Karkotaka, and the princess Ulupi, are all depicted in the Mahabharata.

The Brahma Purana describes the reign of Adishesha as the king of the serpents in Patala:[22]

During the night the light of the moon is not utilised for its coolness but only for illumination.

Since that passes away is not taken notice of by the nāgas who enjoy with gaiety the foodstuffs and the edibles they consume and the great beverages they drink. Nor are Danujas and others aware of it.

O brahmins, the forests, rivers, lakes, and lotus ponds, the cooing of the cuckoo and other sweet birds, the pleasing skies, the unguents and the continuous notes and sounds of musical instruments such as the lute, flute and Mṛdaṅga drums, O brahmins—all these and other beautiful things are enjoyed by virtue of their good luck by Dānavas, Daityas and Nāgas residing in Pātāla. The Tāmasī form of Viṣṇu, named Śeṣa is beneath the lower regions.

Daityas and Dānavas are not capable of recounting his good qualities. He is honoured by Devas and celestial sages. He is spoken of as Ananta. He has a thousand hoods and he is clearly bedecked in Svastika ornaments devoid of impurities. He illuminates all quarters by thousand jewels on his hoods.

—Brahma Purana, Chapter 19

The Kamba Ramayana describes the role of Vasuki in the Samudra Manthana:[23]

The devas and the asuras decided to get Amṛta (Ambrosia—the celestial honey of immortality) by churning the sea of milk. The Devas went to bring Mandara-mountain, to

be used as the churning rod. Their attempt was futile. The asuras made a trial with the same result. The Bhūtagaṇas (Guards) of Śiva also made a vain attempt. On the instruction of Viṣṇu, Garuḍa went and brought the mountain as easily as an eagle takes away a frog. Now Vāsuki should be brought. The Devas and Gandharvas failed in that attempt also. Garuḍa who was haughty of his strength and speed, went to the city of the nāgas (serpents) and requested Vāsuki to come to the sea of Milk. Vāsuki replied that if the matter was so urgent he had no objection for being carried to that place. He took the middle part of Vāsuki in his beak and flew up higher and higher and reached beyond the horizon. Still the lower half of Vāsuki was lying on the ground. So he took Vāsuki in his beak as folded in two. Still the result was the same. Garuḍa became aware of the impossibility of carrying Vāsuki and returned, ashamed and disappointed. Viṣṇu rebuked him for his arrogance. After this, Śiva stretched his hand to Pātāla. Vāsuki became a small bangle on that hand. Thus Vāsuki was brought to the shore of the sea of Milk.

—Kambar, Ramayana, Yuddha Kanda

The Devi Bhagavata Purana describes the legend of Manasa:[24]

Manasā is the mind-born daughter of Maharṣi Kaśyapa; hence she is named Manasā; or it may be She who plays with the mind is Manasā. Or it may be She who meditates on God with her mind and gets rapture in Her meditation of God is named Manasā. She finds pleasure in Her Own Self, the great devotee of Viṣṇu, a Siddha Yoginī. For three Yugas She worshipped Śrī Kṛṣṇa and then She became a Siddha Yoginī. Śrī Kṛṣṇa, the Lord of the Gopīs, seeing the body of Manasā lean and thin due to austerities, or seeing her worn out like the Muni Jarat Kāru called her by the name of Jarat Kāru. Hence Her name has come also to be Jarat Kāru. Kṛṣṇa, the Ocean of Mercy, gave her out of kindness, Her desired boon; She worshipped Him and Śrī Kṛṣṇa also worshipped Her. Devī Manasā is known in the Heavens, in the abode of the Nāgas (serpents), in earth, in Brahmāloka, in all the worlds as of very fair colour, beautiful and charming. She is named Jagad Gaurī as she is of a very fair colour in the world. Her other name is Śaivī and she is the disciple of Śiva. She is named Vaiṣṇavī as she is greatly devoted to Viṣṇu. She saved the Nāgas in the Snake Sacrifice performed by Parikṣit, she is named Nageśvarī and Nāga Bhaginī and She is capable to destroy the effects of poison. She is called Viṣahari. She got the Siddha yoga from Mahādeva; hence She is named Siddha Yoginī

—Devi Bhagavata Purana, Chapter 47

Buddhism

Mucalinda sheltering Gautama Buddha (Buddha in Naga Prok attitude) at Wat Phra That Doi Suthep in Chiang Mai, Thailand.

As in Hinduism, the Buddhist nāga generally has sometimes been portrayed as a human being with a snake or dragon extending over his head.[25] One nāga, in human form, attempted to become a monk, and when telling it that such ordination was impossible, the Buddha told it how to ensure that it would be reborn a human, and so

able to become a monk.[26]

The nāgas are believed to both live on Nagaloka, among the other minor deities and in various parts of the human-inhabited earth. Some of them are water-dwellers, living in streams or the ocean; others are earth-dwellers, living in caverns.

The nāgas are the followers of Virūpākṣa (Pāli: Virūpakkha), one of the Four Heavenly Kings who guards the western direction. They act as guards upon Mount Sumeru, protecting the dēvas of Trāyastriśa from attacks by the asuras.

Among the notable nāgas of Buddhist tradition is Mucalinda, nagaraja and protector of the Buddha. In the Vinaya Sutra (I, 3), shortly after his enlightenment, the Buddha is meditating in a forest when a great storm arises, but graciously, King Mucalinda gives shelter to the Buddha from the storm by covering the Buddha's head with his seven snake heads.[27] Then the king takes the form of a young Brahmin and renders the Buddha homage.[27]

In the Vajrayāna and Mahāsiddha traditions,[28] nāgas in their half-human form are depicted holding a nāgas-jewel, kumbhas of amrita, or a terma that had been elementally encoded by adepts. In Tibetan Buddhism, nāgas are known as klu or klu-mo and they are associated with water and cleanliness, as they live in oceans, rivers, lakes, and springs, and do not want their environments to be disturbed or polluted.[29]

The two chief disciples of the Buddha, Sariputta and Moggallāna are both referred to as Mahānāga or "Great nāga".[30] Some of the most important figures in Buddhist history symbolize nāgas in their names such as Dignāga, Nāgāsēna, and, although other etymons are assigned to his name, Nāgārjuna.

Literature

Nāga at the steps of a building in the Wat Phra Kaew in Bangkok.

The Nāga Saryutta of the Pali Canon consists of suttas specifically devoted to explaining nature of the nāgas.

In the "Devadatta" chapter of the Lotus Sutra, the daughter of the dragon king, an eight year old longnū (龍女, nāgakanyā), after listening to Mañjuśrī preach the Lotus Sutra, transforms into a male Bodhisattva and immediately reaches full enlightenment.[31][32] [33] Some say this tale appears to reinforce the viewpoint prevalent in Mahayana scriptures that a male body is required for Buddhahood, even if a being is so advanced in realization that they can magically transform their body at will and demonstrate the emptiness of the physical form itself.[34] However, many schools of Buddhism and classical, seminal Chinese exegeses interpret the story to repudiate this viewpoint, stating the story demonstrates that women can attain Buddhahood in their current form. [31]

According to tradition, the Prajñapāramita sutras had been given by the Buddha to a great nāga who guarded them in the sea, and were conferred upon Nāgārjuna later.[35]
[36]

In Tibetan Buddhist literature, nāgas are portrayed as guardians or owners of submerged treasure, which can be mere wealth or supernatural, "spiritual" treasures.[29]

Other traditions

In Thailand and Java, the nāga is a wealthy underworld deity. For Malay sailors, nāgas are a type of dragon with many heads. In Laos they are beaked water serpents.[citation needed] In Tibet, they are said to be found in waterways and underground locations, and are susceptible to the suffering caused by human carelessness towards the natural environment.

Sri Lanka

A granite nagaraja guardstone from Sri Lanka.

The Naga people were believed to be an ancient tribe and origins of Sri Lanka.[37][38]
[note 1] According to V. Kanakasabhai, the Oliyar, Parathavar, Maravar, and Eyinar, who were widespread across South India and North-East Sri Lanka, are all Naga tribes.[41]
There are references to them in several ancient texts such as Mahavamsa, Manimekalai, and also in other Sanskrit and Pali literature. They are generally represented as a class of superhumans taking the form of serpents who inhabit a subterranean world. Texts such as Manimekalai represent them as persons in human form.[42][note 2]

Cambodia

Nāga statue front of Angkor Wat in Siem Reap province.
icon

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (November 2023) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

Cambodian seven-headed nāga at the Royal Palace in Phnom Penh.

Stories of nāgas (Khmer: នាគ, néak) have been part of Khmer society for thousands of years, dating back to the Funan era (នគរ វ្នំ). According to reports from two Chinese envoys, Kang Tai and Zhu Ying, the state of Funan was established in the 1st century CE when an Indian prince named Kaundinya I (កៅណ្ឌិន្យទី១) married a nāga princess named Soma (សោមាភូត្តន្ទ្រ saôma kon preah chan; "Soma, daughter of the moon god"; Chinese: 柳葉, 柳叶 Liuye; "Willow Leaf"). The couple is symbolized in the story of Preah Thong and Neang Neak. As the legend goes, Kaundinya received instruction in a dream to take a magic bow from a temple and defeat Soma, the nāga princess and

daughter of the nāga king. During the ensuing battle, they fell in love and later married, establishing the royal lineage of the Funan dynasty. Kaundinya subsequently constructed the capital city of Vyadhapura, and the kingdom became known as Kambujadeśa or Cambodia (កម្ពុជា, Kampuchea).[43][44][45] The love story between Kaundinya and Soma is the foundation for many standard practices in modern-day Khmer culture, including wedding ceremonies and other rituals.[46][47] The Khmer people regard themselves as descendants of the nāgas and many still believe the nāga exist today, destined to one day return and restore prosperity to their people.[citation needed]

Although wars, nature, and the passage of time destroyed many temples from the Funan era, nāgas can still be seen in ancient temples dating to the Chenla and Angkor eras. For instance, the temple now called "The Coiled Nāgas Temple" (បុរាណសាស្ត្រ, Prasat Neak Poan) was previously named, "Emperor's Wealth Temple" (បុរាណសាស្ត្រ ស្រី, Prasat Reach Srey).[48]

In Khmer culture, nāgas symbolize rain, and represent a bridge between the mortal realm (ឋានមនុស្ស) and the realm of devas (Heaven; ឋានទេវតា/ឋានសួគ៌). They have the ability to transform into half or fully human and act as protectors against invisible forces, deities, or malicious intentions. Furthermore, Cambodian nāgas possess numerological symbolism based on the number of their heads. Odd-headed nāgas embody masculinity, infinity, timelessness, and immortality, since all odd numbers derives from the number one (១). Even-headed nāgas denote femininity, physicality, mortality, temporality, and the Earth. Odd headed nāgas are believed to represent immortality and are carved and used throughout Cambodia.[49][50]

Odd-headed nāga icon

This section does not cite any sources. Please help improve this section by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed. (September 2024) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

1-headed nāga

Mostly seen in modern days, carved on objects for protection in temples, monasteries, king's places and residences of deity (អង្គទេព). They symbolize that even if everything in this world is gone, there's still this nāga left bringing victory and happiness to all.

3-headed, Kalyak

Born between the mortal and divine realms, they live at the bottom of the ocean as guardians of wealth, often depicted as evil (nothing to do with the symbolism). They symbolize the Hindu Trimurti; (left Vishnu, middle Shiva, right Brahma) and the three realms - heaven (devas' realm), earth (mortal realm), and hell (norok realm). In Buddhism, the central head represents Buddha, the right Dharma and the left the monks.

5-headed Anontak/Sesak

Born from the earthly elements, they are immortals. They symbolize the 5 directions;

East, West, North, South and Middle (Ganga river, Indus river, Yamuna river, Brahmaputra river (Brahma's Son River), Sarasvati river). In Buddhism, the 5 heads represent the 5 Buddhas - Kadabak, Kunsontho, Koneakumno, Samnak Koudom Gautama Buddha, and Seare Metrey.

7-headed Muchlentak

Originated from the Himalayas, they bring peace and prosperity to humans. They control the seven oceans and seven mountains called 'Seytontaraksatakboriphorn.' Sheltered Gautama Buddha for 7 days and 7 nights (Mucalinda). Often depicted as guardian statues, carved as balustrades on causeways leading to main temples, such as those found in Angkor Wat.[50] They also represent the seven races within nāga society, which has a mythological, or symbolic, association with "the seven colors of the rainbow." They symbolize the Sun, the Moon and five other planets; ចន្ទ្រ (Moon)[also Monday] អង្ការ (Mars)[Tuesday] ពុធ (Mercury)[Wednesday] ពុហស្ស័ត្តិ (Jupiter) [Thursday] សុក្រ (Venus)[Friday] សៅរ៍ (Saturn)[Saturday] អាទិត្យ (Sun)[Sunday].

9-headed Vasukak

The king who rules the Earth (Vasuki). When carved on both sides, the front heads represent reincarnation and behind represent death. He symbolizes the power of the nine immortals of the universe - power of the lightning and thunder of the East (ទិសបូព៌ា), power of the fire of the Southeast (ទិសអាគ្នេយ៍), power of the law and order of the South (ទិសឆ្នេរឦសាន), power of the spirits and demonic creatures of the Southwest (ទិសឆ្នេរលិច), power of the rain of the West (ទិសឆ្នេរលិច), power of the wind of the Northwest (ទិសឆ្នេរឦសាន), power of the wealth and aesthetic of the North (ទិសឆ្នេរលិច), power of destruction of the Northeast (ទិសឆ្នេរឦសាន), power of Brahma (creation and preservation) in the middle (កណ្តាល).

In Indian origin religions, there are four different nāga races:

Primitive Dragons such as the European dragon who can spit fire.

The Spiritual Dragons who are the guardians of wealth, protecting treasure in the ocean. They can take on a half human form.

The Divine Nāgas, who can travel to heaven, came from Lord Indra's realm (the divine realm). They can take on a full human form.

The Supreme and Divine Nāgas, like Vasuki the follower of Lord Shiva, who alone can fight the entire Garuḍa race.

All of them have great powers and can set off storms, rain, tempest and create lands from the sea.

Indonesia

Crowned golden nāga-woodcarving at Keraton Yogyakarta, Java.

In Javanese, Sundanese, and Balinese culture, Indonesia, a nāga is depicted as a crowned, giant, magical serpent, sometimes winged. It is similarly derived from the Shiva-Hinduism tradition, merged with Javanese animism. The nāga in Indonesia mainly derived and influenced by Indic tradition, combined with the native animism tradition of

sacred serpents. In Sanskrit, the term *nāga* literally means snake, but in Java it normally refer to serpent deity, associated with water and fertility. In Borobudur, the *nāgas* are depicted in their human form, but elsewhere they are depicted in animal shape.[51]

Early depictions of circa-9th-century Central Java closely resembled Indic *nāga* which was based on imagery of cobras. During this period, *nāga*-serpents were depicted as giant cobras supporting the waterspout of yoni-lingam. The examples of *nāga*-sculpture can be found in several Javanese candis, including Prambanan, Sambisari, Ijo, and Jawi. In East Java, the Penataran temple complex contain a Candi *Nāga*, an unusual *nāga*-temple with its Hindu-Javanese caryatids holding corpulent *nāgas* aloft.[52]

Crowned *nāga* flanked the stairs entrance of Pura Jagatkarta.

The later depiction since the 15th century, however, was slightly influenced by Chinese dragon imagery—although unlike its Chinese counterparts, Javanese and Balinese *nāgas* do not have legs. *Nāga* as the lesser deity of earth and water is prevalent in the Hindu period of Indonesia, before the introduction of Islam.

In Balinese tradition, *nāgas* are often depicted battling *garuḍas*. Intricately carved *nāgas* are found as stairs railings in bridges or stairs, such as those found in Balinese temples, Ubud monkey forest, and Taman Sari in Yogyakarta.

In a wayang theater story, a snake-like god (*nāga*) named Sanghyang Anantaboga or Antaboga is a guardian deity in the bowels of the earth.[53][54] *nāgas* symbolize the nether realm of earth or underworld.

Laos

Photograph, widely circulated in Laos, purporting to show American sailors in the Vietnam War, who caught a "Mekong Dragon" in Laos. In reality, the image shows a Russell's oarfish (*Regalecus russelii*) caught near San Diego, California in 1996. The *Nāga* (Lao: ພະຍານາກ) is believed to live in the Laotian stretch of the Mekong or its estuaries. Lao mythology maintains that the *nāgas* are the protectors of Vientiane, and by extension, the Lao state. The association with *nāgas* was most clearly articulated during and immediately after the reign of Anouvong. An important poem from this period San Leupphasun (Lao: ສານລືພສູນ) discusses relations between Laos and Thailand in a veiled manner, using the *Nāga* and the *Garuḍa* to represent the Lao and the Thai, respectively.[55] The *Nāga* is incorporated extensively into Lao iconography, and features prominently in Lao culture throughout the length of the country, not only in Vientiane.

Thailand

Phaya Nak or Phaya *Nāga* (Thai: พญานาค; RTGS: phaya nak; lit. 'lord of *Nāga*', phaya derived from Mon which mean high nobility) or Nakkharat (Thai: นาคราช; lit. 'king of

Nāga') in Thai beliefs, nāgas are considered the patrons of water. Nāgas are believed to live in either water bodies or in caves. According to a popular legend, the Mekong River in north-eastern Thailand and Laos was said to be created by two Nāga kings slithering through the area, thus creating the Mekong and the nearby Nan River. The Mekong is synonymous with the unexplained fireballs phenomenon which has long been believed to be created by the nāgas that dwell in the river.[56][57] Common explanations of their sightings have been attributed to oarfish, elongated fish with red crests; however, these are exclusively marine and usually live at great depths.[58]

In November 2022, the Thai government declared the nāga as the national symbol of Thailand, with the aim of promoting Thai culture and traditions and increasing the country's cultural capital to drive the creative economy. The nāga is a mythical creature with long-standing beliefs and connections to the Thai people, and its designation as a national symbol is a significant step towards preserving and promoting Thai culture. The National Culture Commission and the Fine Arts Department developed a prototype image of the nāga that accurately represents Thai beliefs and traditions related to the creature. The prototype image features the four families of nāgas, each with its unique color, and the largest nāga, Nak Vasuki (Thai: นาควาสุคิ), who is related to Buddhism and the Thai monarchy. The nāga is also believed to be a symbol of water and fertility and serves as a guardian of Buddhism.[59][60][61]

Due to the strong relation with everything water, the Nāga in Thai belief also plays a role in rain control. The concept of Nak hai nam (Thai: นาคให้น้ำ; lit. Nāga granting water) is used for annual rainfall prediction. It is still practiced nowadays, most notably during the Royal Ploughing Ceremony. The oracle ranges from 1 nak hai nam (1 Nāga granted water); meaning that abundant rainfall should be observed that year, to maximum 7 nak hai nam (7 nāgas granted water); meaning there might not be adequate rainfall that year.[62]

In northern Thailand, the Singhanavati Kingdom had a strong connection with nāgas. The kingdom was believed to be built with aids of nāgas, and thus, nāgas were highly revered by the royal family. The kingdom, for a period of time, was renamed Yonok Nāga Rāj (lit. Yonok the nagaraja)[63]

The nāgas are also highly revered. The Buddhist temples and palaces are often adorned with various nāgas. The term Nāga is also present in various Thai architecture terms including the nak sadung (นาคสะดุ้ง, the outer roof finial component featuring Nāga-like structure), and the nak than (นาคทับ, the corbel with Nāga-shape).[64]

Moreover, nāgas are sometimes linked to medicine. The nāga Vasuki is present in the legend of the Samudra Manthana, in which Dhanvantari (god of Ayurveda) and amrita (the elixir of eternal life) were churned from the Ocean of Milk. The nāgas can also be founded substituting the snakes in either Rod of Asclepius or mistakenly Caduceus of several medical institutions' symbols. The former seal of Faculty of Medicine, Srinakharinwirot University, and the seal of Society of Medical Student Thailand are

some notable examples using the Caduceus with nagas' presence instead of snakes.
[65]

Folklore

Thai folklore holds the Phaya nāgas to be demi-god creatures, which possess supernatural powers as has been described in Buddhist and Hindu cosmology.[66] The "Kamchanod Forest" (ป่าคำชะโนด; RTGS: Pa Khamchanot) Ban Dung district, Udon Thani province, which is held in high reverence and fear across Thailand, is believed to be the crossroads between the human world and the netherworld, and is frequently depicted in Thai folklore as the site of many hauntings, but more frequently is considered to be the home of the nāga.[67]

According to Shan folklore of Nánzhào Kingdom (now southern China and Southeast Asia during the 8th and 9th centuries, which was centered on present-day Yúnnán in China), the nāga inhabited the Ērhǎi lake and is the creator of the Mekong.[66] In China, the nāga (Chinese: 那伽) is generally more considered to be a dragon.

Appearance

Many people, particularly in Isan (the north-eastern region of Thailand), believe that the nāgas are responsible for unnatural wave phenomena occurring in the rivers or lakes in the vicinity. It is also frequently claimed that the serpent-like demigods are responsible for marks on common objects, such as car hoods or house walls.[57]

A police officer has also claimed to be in contact with the nāga, although the implications of this contact is not thoroughly explained.[68]

In attempts to explain these phenomena, scientists and researchers at the Faculty of Science of Chulalongkorn University have attributed these seemingly preternatural phenomena to standing waves in water, and posit that the existence of the Phaya Nāga is similar to belief in Loch Ness Monster in Scotland or Ogopogo in Canada, and further maintain that the serpent-like tracks of the Phaya Nāga are very possibly forged by humans.[69]

Head of Nāga sculpture in Songkhla Province.
Head of Nāga sculpture in Songkhla Province.

A sign featuring Nāgas by the Mekong River, Nong Khai Province, Thailand: Nāgas and the Mekong are strongly associated in local beliefs.

A sign featuring Nāgas by the Mekong River, Nong Khai Province, Thailand: Nāgas and the Mekong are strongly associated in local beliefs.

Illustration of Royal Barge Anantanakkharat, 1873.
Illustration of Royal Barge Anantanakkharat, 1873.

Royal Barge Anantanakkharat at National Museum of Royal Barges, Bangkok.
Royal Barge Anantanakkharat at National Museum of Royal Barges, Bangkok.

Nāga sculpture at Suvarnabhumi airport.
Nāga sculpture at Suvarnabhumi airport.

Nāga, Himmaman animal on Royal Crematorium King Rama IX.
Nāga, Himmaman animal on Royal Crematorium King Rama IX.

Garuḍa devouring Nāga, at Wat Phra Kaew.
Garuḍa devouring Nāga, at Wat Phra Kaew.

Malaysia

Further information: Lake Chini

In Malay and Orang Asli traditions, the lake Chini, located in Pahang is home to a nāga called Sri Gumum. Depending on legend versions, her predecessor Sri Pahang or her son left the lake and later fought a nāga called Sri Kemboja. Kemboja is the Malay name for Cambodia. Like the nāga-legends there, there are stories about an ancient empire in lake Chini, although the stories are not linked to the nāga-legends.[70][71]

Philippines

Main article: Bakunawa

Bakunawa hilt from a Visayan (Panay) tenegre sword.

The indigenous Bakunawa, a serpent-like moon-eating creature in Philippine mythology, was syncretized with the nāga. It is believed to be the cause of eclipses, earthquakes, rains, and wind.[72] The movements of the bakunawa served as a geomantic calendar system for ancient Filipinos and were part of the shamanistic rituals of the babaylan. It is usually depicted with a characteristically looped tail and was variously believed to inhabit either the sea, the sky, or the underworld.[73] However, the bakunawa may have also syncretized with the Hindu deities, Rahu and Ketu, the navagraha of eclipses.[74]

Examples

Shesha, on whom Vishnu is in yoga nidra (Anantashayana)[75]

Antaboga, the world serpent in Javanese and Balinese mythology of Indonesia, who created the World Turtle Bedawang, on whose back the world resides

Apalala, Nāga in Buddhist mythology

Bakunawa, a dragon in Philippine mythology that is often represented as a gigantic sea serpent. Nāgas are also present in Kapampangan polytheistic beliefs, such as Lakandanum. (See Deities of Philippine mythology.)

Kaliya, a snake conquered by Krishna

Karkotaka, a nāga king in Indian mythology who controls weather, that lived in a forest near Nishadha Kingdom and stung Nala at the request of Indra

Paravataksha, his sword causes earthquakes and his roar caused thunder.

Manasa, the Hindu goddess of nāgas and curer of snake-bite and sister of Vasuki

Mucalinda, a nāga in Buddhism who protected the Gautama Buddha from the elements

after his enlightenment

Naga Seri Gumum, who lives in Tasik Chini, a freshwater lake in Pahang, Malaysia

Padmavati, the Nāgī queen & companion of Dharanendra

Shwe Nabay (Naga Medaw), a goddess or a Nat spirit in Burmese animistic mythology, who is believed to have married a nāga and died from heartbreak after he left her

Takshaka, the king of the nāgas, and ruler of Khandava forest

Ulupi, a wife of Arjuna in the epic Mahabharata

Vasuki, the king of nāgas and who coils over Shiva's neck^[76] and offered to serve as the rope to pull Mount Mandara in the Samudra Manthana (Churning of the Ocean of Milk) to release the amrita (nectar of the immortality).

Yulong, the Dragon King of the West Sea in the Chinese classical novel Journey to the West, becomes a nāga after completing his journey with Xuanzang

In popular culture

This article may contain irrelevant references to popular culture. Please help improve it by removing such content and adding citations to reliable, independent sources.

(September 2024)

Film and television

A 4-headed Naga symbol and characters were part of the Leviathan story arc in the 1969 season of the gothic television soap opera Dark Shadows.

Several Bollywood films have been made about female nāgas, including Nagin (1954), Nagin (1976), Nagina (1986), Nigahen (1989), Jaani Dushman: Ek Anokhi Kahani (2002), and Hisss (2010). Nāga also appear in television series such as Naagin (2007-2009), Naagin (2015) and Adhuri Kahaani Hamari (2015-2016).

In the 1998 film Jungle Boy, the Naga is depicted as a large cobra deity that grants the gift of understanding all languages to those who are pure of heart and punishes those who are not pure of heart in different ways.

In the 1999 Telugu film Devi, a Nagini played by Prema comes to Earth to protect a woman who saves her when she was in the snake form. She eventually falls in love with a human.

The Nagas are antagonists in the cartoon The Secret Saturdays. They served the ancient Sumerian cryptid Kur and attempted to push Zak Saturday into the dark side after learning that he was Kur reincarnated, but eventually served V. V. Argost when he gained his own Kur powers.

Many lakorn (Thai television soap operas) are based on a Phaya Naga legend, such as Poot Mae Nam Khong (ภูตแม่แม่น้ำโขง) in 2008,^[77] Manisawat (มนิสาวัต) in 2013,^[78] or Nakee (นาคี) in 2016.^[79]

A search for the Phaya Naga was featured in a Destination Truth episode on the SyFy (formerly Sci-Fi Channel) series in Series 01 (episode 02).^[80]

The dragons in the 2021 film Raya and the Last Dragon are based on the Phaya Naga. A serpent god named Nāga is featured in the 2021 animated film Batman: Soul of the Dragon.

They are featured Pakistani movies like Naag aur Nagin (2005)

Literature

Nāga are featured in *The Silent Bells*, the fourth book in N. D. Wilson's *Ashtown Burials* series.

The Japanese anime and manga series, *Slayers* (1989), has a principal character named Naga the Serpent (introduced in 1990).

In J. K. Rowling's *Wizarding World*, Nagini is one of Voldemort's horcruxes in the *Harry Potter* series and a Maledictus, a carrier of blood curse, in the 2018 film *Fantastic Beasts: The Crimes of Grindlewald*. Her curse allows her to change into a snake and back into a human, but her snake form eventually becomes permanent.

In the *Xanth* series by Piers Anthony, the Naga are a race of human-headed serpents that can transform between fully human and serpent forms, including any species and size of snake.

In *The God in the Bowl*, one of the original *Conan the Barbarian* stories by Robert E. Howard, the titular God is possibly a Nāga-like creature.

Games

"Naga" is name of a T1 battle cruiser in *EVE Online* . Shown as a long, thin hull, and used for long range attacks.

Nagas appear in the *Dungeons & Dragons* roleplaying game, depicted as massive serpents with human heads.

The Nagas appear in the multiple franchises by Blizzard Entertainment. In *Warcraft*, they are depicted as ancient night elves that have snake-like tails in place of legs, and have other serpentine or aquatic features such as scales and fins. The Nagas came to be when they were transformed from the ancient night elves by the Old Gods. Their queen Azshara is described as a demigoddess. The digital card game *Hearthstone* incorporated Naga as a minion type in its *Battlegrounds* game mode on May 10, 2022.

[81]

Nagas also appear in *The Battle for Wesnoth*, and are depicted as a more snakelike counterpart to the merfolk, who are often their enemies.

Magic: The Gathering's 2014–2015 block, set on the plane of Tarkir, featured Naga as humanoid snakes versed in powerful venoms and poisons with two arms and no other appendages. They are aligned with the Sultai clan in the sets, *Khans of Tarkir*[82] and *Fate Reforged*,[83] and with the Silumgar clan in the *Dragons of Tarkir*[84] set.

Nagas are units in *Heroes of Might and Magic III*.

Gigabash features Rawa, a bipedal Phaya Naga inspired kaiju among its playable cast of creatures.

Gallery

Nāga and Nagini in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Nāga and Nagini in Bhubaneswar, Odisha

Nāga on copper pillar in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh India

Nāga on copper pillar in Kullu, Himachal Pradesh India

Nāga king in Anjali mudra in Deogarh temple, Madhya Pradesh

Nāga king in Anjali mudra in Deogarh temple, Madhya Pradesh

Maninaga and Svastika. Kushan period, 2nd century CE, Rajgir, Bihar

Maninaga and Svastika. Kushan period, 2nd century CE, Rajgir, Bihar

Nāga (marked 15) in the Varaha panel at Udayagiri Caves

Nāga (marked 15) in the Varaha panel at Udayagiri Caves

Tirthankara Parshvanatha of Jainism standing under Nāga hood

Tirthankara Parshvanatha of Jainism standing under Nāga hood

Nāga supporting waterspout of Yoni-Lingam, Yogyakarta Java, c. 9th century

Nāga supporting waterspout of Yoni-Lingam, Yogyakarta Java, c. 9th century

Nāga temple, Penataran, East Java

Nāga temple, Penataran, East Java

Nāga bridge at Ubud monkey forest, Bali

Nāga bridge at Ubud monkey forest, Bali

Nāga guarding Anouvong's Wat Sisaket in Vientiane

Nāga guarding Anouvong's Wat Sisaket in Vientiane

Sesa Nāga at Bangkok international airport, Thailand

Sesa Nāga at Bangkok international airport, Thailand

Nāga at the funeral of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in 2017

Nāga at the funeral of King Bhumibol Adulyadej of Thailand in 2017

See also

Ichchadhari naag and naagin (shape-shifting cobra)

Lamia

List of Nāgas

Mahoraga

Naga Kingdom

Naga people (Lanka)

Nagarjuna

Nagvanshi

Naga Viper pepper

Phra Lak Phra Lam

Rocket Festival

Serpent (symbolism)

Snake worship

Vritra

Explanatory notes

Kathiragesu Indrapala writes that "In the traditions preserved in the early Sri Lankan chronicles as well as in the early Tamil literary works the Nagas appear as a distinct group".[39] He further writes that "the adoption of the Tamil language was helping the Nagas in the Tamil chiefdoms to be assimilated into the major ethnic group there".[40]

In the Mahāvamsa as indeed in the ancient Sanskrit and Pali literature in general, the nāgas are never represented as human beings, but as a class of superhuman beings, who inhabited a subterranean world.

References

"Lord Shiva". Sanskrit Dictionary. Archived from the original on 24 February 2021.

Retrieved 27 September 2018.

"Nāgas". Brill's Encyclopedia of Hinduism Online. doi:10.1163/2212-5019_beh_com_000337.

Elgood, Heather (2000). *Hinduism and the Religious Arts*. London: Cassell. p. 234. ISBN 0-304-70739-2.

Apte, Vaman Shivram (1997). *The student's English-Sanskrit dictionary* (3rd rev. & enl. ed.). Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass. ISBN 81-208-0299-3., p. 423. The first definition of nāgaḥ given reads "A snake in general, particularly the cobra." p.539

Proto-IE: *(s)nēg-o-, Meaning: snake, Old Indian: nāgá- m. 'snake', Germanic: *snēk-a-m., *snak-an- m., *snak-ō f.; *snak-a- vb.: "Indo-European etymology". Archived from the original on 21 January 2019. Retrieved 9 August 2010.

Mayrhofer, Manfred (1996). *Etymologisches Wörterbuch des Altindoarischen*. Vol. 2. Heidelberg: Winter., p. 33.

Lange, Gerrit (2019). "Cobra Deities and Divine Cobras: The Ambiguous Animality of Nāgas". *Religions*. 10 (8): 454. doi:10.3390/rel10080454.

Deeg, Max (2016). *Miscellanae Nepalica. The Foundation Legend of Nepal in Its Trans-Himalayan Context*. Lumbini: LIRI.

"Naga | Hindu mythology". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 4 September 2022. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

"Why was vasuki used in Samudra Manthan great ocean Churning". *Hinduism Stack Exchange*. Archived from the original on 11 May 2018. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

"Garuḍa | Hindu mythology". *Encyclopedia Britannica*. Archived from the original on 11 May 2018. Retrieved 11 May 2018.

For the story of wrapping Vāsuki around the neck and Śeṣa around the belly and for the name in his sahasranama as Sarpagraiveyakāṅgādaḥ ("Who has a serpent around his neck"), which refers to this standard iconographic element, see: Krishan, Yuvraj (1999), *Gaṇeśa: Unravelling An Enigma*, Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers, ISBN 81-208-1413-4, pp=51-52.

For text of a stone inscription dated 1470 identifying Ganesha's sacred thread as the serpent Śeṣa, see: Martin-Dubost, p. 202.

For an overview of snake images in Ganesha iconography, see: Martin-Dubost, Paul (1997). *Gaṇeśa: The Enchanter of the Three Worlds*. Mumbai: Project for Indian Cultural Studies. ISBN 81-900184-3-4, p. 202.

Flood, Gavin (1996). *An Introduction to Hinduism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. ISBN 0-521-43878-0.; p. 151

König, Ditte (1984). *Das Tor zur Unterwelt. Mythologie und Kult des Termitenhügels in der schriftlichen und mündlichen Tradition Indiens*. Heidelberg: Franz Steiner.

Alloco, Amy (2013). *Fear, Reverence and Ambivalence. Divine Snakes in Contemporary South India*. *Religions of South Asia* 7: 230–48.

Alloco, Amy. 2014. *Snakes in the Dark Age. Human Action, Karmic Retribution, and the*

Possibilities for Hindu Animal Ethics. In *Asian Perspectives on Animal Ethics. Rethinking the Nonhuman*. Edited by Neil Dalal and Chloë Taylor. London and New York: Routledge.

Lange, Gerrit (2017). "Western Himalayan Nāgs as Guardians of Water Resources". *Journal for the Study of Religion, Nature & Culture*. 11 (3): 361–378.

doi:10.1558/jsrnc.33600.

Lange, Gerrit (2024). "Chapter 7: Creating a Landscape through Myths. The Journey of Naiṇī or Nāginā Devī, a Nine-fold Western Himalayan Hindu Goddess". In Hegewald, Julia; Gymnich, Marion (eds.). *Images and Stories of the Origin(s) of the World and Humankind*. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck. pp. 178–204. ISBN 978-3-16-162737-8.

Lange, Gerrit (26 July 2019). "Cobra Deities and Divine Cobras: The Ambiguous Animality of Nāgas". *Religions*. 10 (8): 454. doi:10.3390/rel10080454. ISSN 2077-1444. www.wisdomlib.org (17 March 2018). "The Magnitude of Netherworlds [Chapter 19]". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

www.wisdomlib.org (28 January 2019). "Story of Vāsuki". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

www.wisdomlib.org (15 May 2013). "On Manasā's story [Chapter 47]". www.wisdomlib.org. Archived from the original on 5 August 2022. Retrieved 5 August 2022.

Forbes, Andrew; Henley, Daniel; Ingersoll, Ernest; Henley, David. "Indian Nagas and Draconic Prototypes". *The Illustrated Book of Dragons and Dragon Lore*. Cognoscenti Books. ASIN B00D959PJ0.

Brahmavamso, Ajahn. "VINAYA The Ordination Ceremony of a Monk". Archived from the original on 16 January 2013. Retrieved 12 October 2012.

P. 72 *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* By Richard Francis Gombrich
Béer 1999, p. 71.

The Tibetan Book of the Dead. Translated by Dorje, Gyurnme; Coleman, Graham; Jinpa, Thupten. New York: Viking Press. 2005. p. 508. ISBN 0-670-85886-2.

P. 74 *How Buddhism Began: The Conditioned Genesis of the Early Teachings* By Richard Francis Gombrich

Schuster, Nancy (30 June 1981). "Changing the Female Body: Wise Women and the Bodhisattva Career in Some Mahāratnakūṭasūtras". *Journal of the International Association of Buddhist Studies*. 4 (1): 24–69. Archived from the original on 5 September 2020. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

Kubo Tsugunari, Yuyama Akira (tr.). *The Lotus Sutra*. Revised 2nd ed. Berkeley, Calif. : Numata Center for Buddhist Translation and Research, 2007. ISBN 978-1-886439-39-9, pp. 191-192

Soka Gakkai Dictionary of Buddhism, "Devadatta Chapter"

Peach, Lucinda Joy (2002). "Social Responsibility, Sex Change, and Salvation: Gender Justice in the Lotus Sūtra". *Philosophy East and West*. 52 (1): 50–74. CiteSeerX 10.1.1.820.9411. doi:10.1353/pew.2002.0003. JSTOR 1400133. S2CID 146337273. ProQuest 216882403.

Thomas E. Donaldson (2001). *Iconography of the Buddhist Sculpture of Orissa*: Text.

Abhinav Publications. p. 276. ISBN 978-81-7017-406-6. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 September 2017.

Tāranātha (Jo-nang-pa) (1990). Taranatha's History of Buddhism in India. Motilal Banarsidass. p. 384. ISBN 978-81-208-0696-2. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 September 2017.

Intirapālā, Kārttikēcu (2005). The evolution of an ethnic identity: the Tamils in Sri Lanka c. 300 BCE to c. 1200 CE. M.V. Publications for the South Asian Studies Centre, Sydney. pp. 172–174. ISBN 978-0-646-42546-7. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 22 January 2022.

Indrapala 2005, p. 172,174.

Indrapala 2005, p. 173.

Indrapala 2005, p. 174.

Kanakasabhai, V. (1904). The Tamils Eighteen Hundred Years Ago. Asian Educational Services. ISBN 978-81-206-0150-5. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 22 January 2022.

Senarath Paranavitana (1961). Journal of the Ceylon branch of the Royal Asiatic society# The Arya Kingdom in North Ceylon. Vol. VII, part II. Colombo apothecaries Co. Ltd. p. 181.

Chad, Raymond (1 April 2005). "Regional Geographic Influence on Two Khmer Polities". Salve Regina University, Faculty and Staff: Articles and Papers: 137. Archived from the original on 4 March 2016. Retrieved 1 November 2015.

The Asia-Pacific World [1][permanent dead link]. Retrieved March 5, 2013.

Sanyal, Sanjeev (10 August 2016). The Ocean of Churn: How the Indian Ocean Shaped Human History. Penguin UK. pp. 82–84. ISBN 978-93-86057-61-7. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 11 May 2021.

"C. 87 Stela from Mý Són B6". isaw.nyu.edu. Archived from the original on 12 May 2021. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Monk traditional ceremony Cambodia". 15 July 2017. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Neak Pean temple Angkor - "The entwined snakes"". www.renown-travel.com. Archived from the original on 24 October 2020. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

"Nagas". www.cambodiasite.nl. Archived from the original on 11 November 2020. Retrieved 20 November 2020.

Rosen, Brenda (2009). The Mythical Creatures Bible: The Definitive Guide to Legendary Beings. Sterling Publishing Company, Inc. ISBN 978-1-4027-6536-0. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Miksic, John (13 November 2012). Borobudur: Golden Tales of the Buddhas. Tuttle Publishing. ISBN 978-1-4629-0910-0. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Kinney, Ann R.; Klokke, Marijke J.; Kieven, Lydia (2003). Worshiping Siva and Buddha: The Temple Art of East Java. University of Hawaii Press. ISBN 978-0-8248-2779-3. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 7 November 2020.

Rodemeier, Susanne (1993). Lego-lego-Platz und Naga-Darstellung . Jenseitige Kräfte im Zentrum einer Quellenstudie über die ostindonesische Insel Alor [Lego-lego Place and Naga-Image; Ideas of Supernatural Power as far as Known from Publications

Concerning the Eastern Indonesia Island Alor] (Thesis) (in German). Archived from the original on 28 June 2020. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

Heinrich Zimmer: Indische Mythen und Symbole. Diederichs, Düsseldorf 1981, ISBN 3-424-00693-9

Ngaosīvat, Mayurī; Pheuiphanh Ngaosyvathn (1998). Paths to conflagration: fifty years of diplomacy and warfare in Laos, Thailand, and Vietnam, 1778-1828. Studies on Southeast Asia. Vol. 24. Ithaca, N.Y.: Southeast Asia Program Publications, Cornell University. p. 80. ISBN 0-87727-723-0. OCLC 38909607. Archived from the original on 27 May 2012. Retrieved 16 November 2011.

สุจิตต์ วงษ์เทศ (2 October 2019). "ตำนานกำเนิด โขง-ซี-มูล-หนองหาน สายน้ำแห่งชีวิตของคนอีสาน" (in Thai). ศิลปวัฒนธรรม. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

"ปริศนา?? บั้งไฟพญานาค: ต่างมุมมองต่างความคิด". ASTV Manager (in Thai). 27 September 2005. Archived from the original on 9 October 2016. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

Roberts, Tyson R. (Winter 2002). "Payanak as a mythical animal and as the living species Regalecus glesne (oarfish, Regalecidae, Lampridiformes)" (PDF). Natural History Bulletin of the Siam Society. 50 (2): 211. ISSN 0080-9462.

รัฐบาลกำหนด 'นาค' เป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำชาติไทย ต่อยอดซอฟต์พาวเวอร์ [The government has designated 'Nak' as the national symbol of Thailand, expanding on soft power], Thethaiger, 2 November 2022

รัฐบาลกำหนดให้ "นาค" เป็นเอกลักษณ์ประจำชาติไทย ประเภทสัตว์ในตำนาน ต่อยอด Soft Power ขับเคลื่อนเศรษฐกิจสร้างสรรค์ [The government has designated "Nak" as the national symbol of Thailand. It is a legendary creature type, which expands on soft power to drive the creative economy.] (in Thai), Thaigov, 1 November 2022

"Naga named as national symbol", Bangkok Post, Bangkokpost, 2 November 2022

กิเลน ประลองเชิง (8 September 2011). "นาคให้น้ำ". ไทยรัฐ. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

มานิต วัลลิโภดม (25 October 2018). "สำรวจความเชื่อ "นาคสร้างเมืองมนุษย์" ที่ภายหลังคือเมือง "เชียงแสน"" (in Thai). ศิลปวัฒนธรรม. Archived from the original on 9 June 2020. Retrieved 21 May 2020.

Miles (28 June 2020). "Naka Cave, Thailand: The Truth Behind the Legends of Snake Rock". Journeying The Globe. Archived from the original on 10 April 2021. Retrieved 10 April 2021.

For the former logo of Faculty of Medicine, Srinakharinwirot University, see: File:Logo of Med SWU.gif. The fact was mentioned in the official pamphlet (2019, in Thai), and in the official introductory video (2015, in Thai) for the seal of the Society of Medical Students of Thailand, see: thesmst.com

ก้อง กังฟู (1 June 2014). "ปาฏิหาริย์...พญานาคราช มีปรากฏการณ์..เหนือธรรมชาติ". Thairath (in Thai). Archived from the original on 13 May 2021. Retrieved 8 October 2016.

"คำชะโนด เกาะลอยน้ำ เพชรตำนานปาล์กลับป่าคำชะโนด". dmc (in Thai). 8 October 2014.

Archived from the original on 28 September 2021. Retrieved 3 October 2016.

"พญานาคบึงโขงหลงที่เป็นข่าว.mp4". Nation TV (in Thai). 18 July 2011. Archived from the original on 7 November 2021. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

"พญานาค..วิทยาศาสตร์ กับ ความเชื่อ". Nation TV (in Thai). 31 August 2011. Archived from the original on 3 September 2011. Retrieved 2 October 2016.

"Legends". Archived from the original on 24 October 2007.

"Journey Malaysia » Tasik Chini". journeymalaysia.com. Archived from the original on 19 June 2017. Retrieved 10 May 2007.

Valiente, Tito Genova (1 January 2015). "A serpent, this earth and the end of the year". *BusinessMirror*. ProQuest 1644507809. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 23 August 2020.

McCoy, Alfred W. (1982). "Baylan: animist religion and Philippine peasant ideology". *Philippine Quarterly of Culture and Society*. 10 (3): 141–194. JSTOR 29791761.

"BAKUNAWA: The Moon Eating Dragon of Philippine Mythology". The Aswang Project. 27 May 2016. Archived from the original on 13 October 2019. Retrieved 3 December 2019.

Bhāgavata Purāṇa 10.1.24

Bhāgavata Purāṇa 3.26.25

"ละคร ภูตแม่น้ำโขง". Sanook (in Thai). 13 October 2008. Archived from the original on 17 December 2017. Retrieved 31 July 2021.

สี่สิบบันทึง 17-12-11#ฟัตตัง มณีสาวก (in Thai). ammy wareerat. 17 December 2011. Archived from the original on 7 November 2021 – via YouTube.

"Nakee – The Serpent Queen". lovefia. 1 November 2016. Archived from the original on 11 October 2022. Retrieved 31 July 2021.

"Destination Truth" Haunted Village/Naga (TV Episode 2007) at IMDb Edit this at Wikidata

Chalk, Andy (5 May 2022). "The Naga are coming to Hearthstone Battlegrounds on May 10". PC Gamer. Archived from the original on 5 May 2022. Retrieved 10 May 2022.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Khans of Tarkir, Part 1". *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*. Archived from the original on 9 August 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Fate Reforged". *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*. Archived from the original on 20 July 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

"Planeswalker's Guide to Dragons of Tarkir, Part 1". *MAGIC: THE GATHERING*. Archived from the original on 28 July 2015. Retrieved 27 July 2015.

Sources

Béer, Robert (1999), *The Encyclopedia of Tibetan Symbols and Motifs*, Shambhala, ISBN 978-1-57062-416-2, archived from the original on 11 October 2022, retrieved 7 November 2020

Indrapala, Karthigesu (2005). *The Evolution of an Ethnic Identity - The Tamils of Sri Lanka 300 B.C.E to 1200 C.E.* M.V. Publications for the South Asian Studies Centre, Sydney. ISBN 0-646-42546-3.

Further reading

Müller-Ebeling, Claudia; Rātsch, Christian; Shahi, Surendra Bahadur (2002), *Shamanism and Tantra in the Himalayas, Inner Traditions*, ISBN 978-0-89281-913-3

Maehle, Gregor (2007), *Ashtanga Yoga: Practice and Philosophy*, New World Library, ISBN 978-1-57731-606-0

Norbu, Chögyal Namkhai (1999), *The Crystal and The Way of Light: Sutra, Tantra and*

Dzogchen, Snow Lion Publications, ISBN 1-55939-135-9

Hāṇḍā, Omacanda (2004), Naga cults and traditions in the western Himalaya, Indus Publishing, ISBN 978-81-7387-161-0, archived from the original on 11 October 2022, retrieved 15 September 2016

Visser, Marinus Willem de (1913), The dragon in China and Japan, Amsterdam:J. Müller

Vogel, J. Ph. (1926), Indian serpent-lore; or, The Nāgas in Hindu legend and art, London, A. Probsthain, ISBN 978-81-206-1071-2, retrieved 9 November 2023

External links

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Nāga.

Nagiana (a site dedicated to Nāga ancestors)

nagas in the Pali Canon

nagas

Image of a Seven-Headed Nāga

nagas and Serpents

Depictions of Nagas in the area of Angkor Wat in Cambodia

nagas and Naginis: Serpent Figures in Hinduism and Buddhism

Mekong River Commission paper on eels

Dr. Kanoksilpa, a pediatrician at Nong Khai hospital, studied this phenomenon for four years and concludes the most likely explanation to be seasonal accumulations of methane gas

vte

Hindu deities and texts

vte

Worship in Hinduism

vte

Topics in Buddhism

Categories: NāgasAnthropomorphic snakesIndian dragonsBuddhist deitiesHindu deitiesLegendary creatures in Hindu mythologyHindu snake worshipMythological human–animal hybridsLegendary serpentsSea and river godsShapeshiftersSnake deitiesTutelary deitiesWater spiritsSnake godsNational symbols of ThailandChthonic beings

This page was last edited on 12 December 2025, at 05:04 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate
Create account
Log in

Qilin

Article
Talk
Read
Edit
View history

Tools
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
This article is about the legendary creature. For other uses, see Qilin (disambiguation).
Qilin

Qilin-shaped incense burner (Qing dynasty, c. 17th-18th century)

Creature information
Grouping Legendary creature
Sub groupingChimera
Similar entities kirin, kỳ lân, gilen
Origin
Country China
Qilin

"Qilin" in Chinese characters

Chinese name
Chinese 麒麟
Transcriptions

Vietnamese name
Vietnamese alphabet kỳ lân
Chữ Hán 麒麟
Thai name
Thai ไท่เลอ
RTGS kilen
Korean name
Hangul 기린
Hanja 麒麟
Transcriptions

Japanese name
Kanji 麒麟

Hiragana きりん
Transcriptions

Manchu name

Manchu script ᡵᡳᡵᡳᠨ

Romanization kilin

The qilin (English: /tʃiˈlɪn/ chee-LIN; Chinese: 麒麟; pinyin: qílín) is a legendary hooved chimerical creature that appears in Chinese mythology, and is said to appear with the imminent arrival or death of a sage or illustrious ruler.[1] Qilin are a specific type of the lin mythological family of one-horned beasts. The qilin also appears in the mythologies of other Chinese-influenced cultures.

Origins

Qilin tomb guardian, 4th century CE

The earliest mention of the mythical qilin is in the poem 麟之趾; Lín zhī zhǐ; 'Feet of the Lin' included in the Classic of Poetry (11th – 7th c. BCE).[2][3]

麟之趾，振振公子，于嗟麟兮。
麟之定，振振公姓，于嗟麟兮。
麟之角，振振公族，于嗟麟兮。

Translation:

The feet of the Qilin, the noble sons of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

The forehead of the Qilin, the noble kinsmen of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

The horn of the Qilin, the noble clansmen of our lord. Ah, the Qilin!

—[4]

Spring and Autumn Annals mentioned that a lin (麟) was captured in the 14th year of Duke Ai of Lu (魯哀公) (481 CE); Zuo Zhuan credited Confucius with identifying the lin as such.[5][6][7]

The bisyllabic form qilin (麒麟 ~ 騏驎), which carries the same generic meaning as lin alone, is attested in works dated to the Warring States period (475–221 BCE).[citation needed] Qi denotes the male and lin denotes the female[8] according to Shuowen Jiezi.[9][10]

The legendary image of the qilin became associated with the image of the giraffe in the Ming dynasty.[11][12] The identification of the qilin with giraffes began after Zheng He's 15th-century voyage to East Africa (landing, among other places, in modern-day Somalia). The Ming Dynasty bought giraffes from the Somali merchants along with zebras, incense, and various other exotic animals.[13] Zheng He's fleet brought back two giraffes to Nanjing and they were mistaken by the emperor for the mythical creature. The identification of qilin with giraffes has had a lasting influence: even today, the same word is used for the mythical animal and the giraffe in both Korean and Japanese.[14]

A Ming-era painting of a tribute giraffe, which was thought to be a qilin by court officials, from Bengal

Axel Schuessler reconstructs Old Chinese pronunciation of 麒麟 as *gərin. Finnish linguist Juha Janhunen tentatively compares *gərin to an etymon reconstructed as *kalimV,[15] denoting "whale"; and represented in the language isolate Nivkh and four different language families Tungusic, Mongolic, Turkic and Samoyedic, wherein *kalay(ə)ng means "whale" (in Nenets) and *kalVyə "mammoth" (in Enets and Nganasan). As even aborigines "vaguely familiar with the underlying real animals" often confuse the whale, mammoth, and unicorn: they conceptualized the mammoth and whale as aquatic, as well as the mammoth and unicorn possessing a single horn; for inland populations, the extant whale "remains ... an abstraction, in this respect being no different from the extinct mammoth or the truly mythical unicorn." However, Janhunen cautiously remarks that "[t]he formal and semantic similarity between *kilin < *gilin ~ *gīlin 'unicorn' and *kalimV 'whale' (but also Samoyedic *kalay- 'mammoth') is sufficient to support, though perhaps not confirm, the hypothesis of an etymological connection", and also notes a possible connection between Old Chinese and Mongolian (*)kers ~ (*)keris ~ (*)kiris "rhinoceros" (Khalkha: хирс).[16]

Description

A Qing dynasty statue of a qilin in Beijing's Summer Palace

Qilin generally have Chinese dragon-like features: similar heads with antlers, eyes with thick eyelashes, manes that always flow upward, and beards. The body is fully or partially scaled and often shaped like an ox, deer, or horse, or more commonly a goat. [17][18] They are always shown with cloven hooves.[19] While dragons in China (and thus qilin) are also most commonly depicted as golden, qilin may be of any color or even various colors, and can be depicted as bejeweled or exhibiting a jewel-like brilliance.[20]

The qilin is depicted throughout a wide range of Chinese art, sometimes with parts of their bodies on fire.[19]

Legends tell that qilin have appeared in the garden of the legendary Yellow Emperor and in the capital of Emperor Yao; both events bore testimony to the benevolent nature of the rulers.[18] It has also been told that the birth of the great sage Confucius was foretold by the arrival of a qilin.[1]

Qilin as unicorns

One-horned beast depicted in ceramic model from Northern Wei period (386–534)

In modern times, the depictions of qilin have often fused with the Western concept of unicorns,[citation needed] and qilin (麒麟) is often translated into English as "unicorn". The Han dynasty dictionary Shuowen Jiezi describes qi as single-horned,[9] and it can sometimes be depicted as having a single horn. The translation, however, may be

misleading, as qilin can also be depicted as having two horns. In modern Chinese, "one-horned beast" (独角兽; 獨角獸; Dújiǎoshòu) is used for "unicorns". A number of different Chinese mythical creatures can be depicted with a single horn, and a qilin depicted with one horn may be called a "one-horned qilin" in Chinese.[citation needed]

Nevertheless, the mythical and etymological connections between the creatures have been noted by various cultural studies[14][15][16] and even the Chinese government, which has minted silver, gold, and platinum commemorative coins depicting both archetypal creatures.[21]

Other cultural representations

Japan

Kirin, which has also come to be used as the modern Japanese word for a giraffe, are similar to qilin. Japanese art tends to depict the kirin as more deer-like than in Chinese art. Alternatively, it is depicted as a dragon shaped like a deer, but with an ox's tail[22] instead of a lion's tail. They are also often portrayed as partially unicorn-like in appearance, but with a backwards curving horn.

Korea

Girin or kirin (기린) is the Korean form of qilin. It is described as a maned creature with the torso of a deer, an ox tail with the hooves of a horse. The girin were initially depicted as more deer-like, however over time they have transformed into more horse-like.[23] They were one of the four divine creatures along with the dragon, phoenix, and turtle. Girin were extensively used in Korean royal and Buddhist arts.

In modern Korean, the term "girin" is used for "giraffe".

Thailand

In Thailand, the qilin is known as "gilen" (Thai: กิเลน), and is a member of the pantheon of Thai Himapant forest mythical animals. It is most probable that the Gilen was introduced into the pantheon under the influence of the Tai Yai who came down from Southern China to settle in Siam in ancient times, and the legend was probably incorporated into the Himapant legends of Siam in this manner. The Gilen is a mixture of various animals which come from differing elemental environments, representing elemental magical forces present within each personified creature. Many of the Himapant animals actually represent gods and devas of the Celestial Realms, and bodhisattvas, who manifest as personifications which represent the true nature of each creature deity through the symbolism of the various body parts amalgamated into the design of the Mythical creature.[24]

In Phra Aphai Mani, the masterpiece epic poem of Sunthorn Phu, a renowned poet of the 18th century, there is a monster that is Sudsakorn's steed, one of the main characters in the epic. This creature was called "Ma Nin Mangkorn" (Thai: ม้านิลมังกร, "ceylonite dragon horse") and is depicted as having diamond fangs, ceylonite scales,

and a birthmark on the tongue. It was a mixture of horse, dragon, deer antlers, fish scales, and Phaya Nak tail, and has black sequins all over. Its appearance resembles a qilin.[25]

Qilin Dance

The Qilin dance is traditionally performed by the Hakka people.[26][27] The Qilin is a mythical creature believed to symbolize good fortune, prosperity, and harmony,[28] and performers wear ornate Qilin costumes with vibrant colors and intricate details to resemble the mythical creature.[28]

The Qilin costume features a single horn in the middle, with finned ridges lined with fur. [26] The dance involves graceful and synchronized movements that mimic cats and tigers.[28] The performance routine typically tells of a Qilin exiting its lair, playfully move round, and looking for vegetable to eat. After eating from the vegetable, it spits it out, and it also spits a jade book, before moving around and returning back to its lair.[26]

The dance is accompanied by music played on traditional Chinese instruments, including drums, flutes, and cymbals.[27] Today, similar to the Chinese Lion and Dragon dances, the Qilin dance is commonly performed during important Chinese celebrations and festivals, such as Chinese New Year and weddings, it is also performed to preserve cultural traditions and enhance community cohesion.[26][27]

Gallery

Porcelain qilin with the head and scaly body of a dragon, tail of a lion and cloven hoofs like a deer, its body enveloped in sacred flames (Qing dynasty, c. 1750)

Porcelain qilin with the head and scaly body of a dragon, tail of a lion and cloven hoofs like a deer, its body enveloped in sacred flames (Qing dynasty, c. 1750)

Qilin with rider (Qing dynasty, c. 1800-1894)

Qilin with rider (Qing dynasty, c. 1800-1894)

Plate with a qilin in the center (Yuan dynasty, c. 1350)

Plate with a qilin in the center (Yuan dynasty, c. 1350)

Embroidered qilin buzì (Qing dynasty, 19th century)

Embroidered qilin buzì (Qing dynasty, 19th century)

Ceramic Kỳ lân statue (Later Lê or Nguyen dynasty, c. 17th-19th century)

Ceramic Kỳ lân statue (Later Lê or Nguyen dynasty, c. 17th-19th century)

Qilin, dragon and lion set in floral sprays (Ottoman empire, mid-16th century)

Qilin, dragon and lion set in floral sprays (Ottoman empire, mid-16th century)

An illustration of qilin and simurgh in Gulistan (1582)

An illustration of qilin and simurgh in Gulistan (1582)

Bronze qilin paperweight (Ming dynasty, c. 15th century)

Bronze qilin paperweight (Ming dynasty, c. 15th century)

Qilin depicted in the Gujin Tushu Jicheng (Qing dynasty, c. 1700-1725)

Qilin depicted in the Gujin Tushu Jicheng (Qing dynasty, c. 1700-1725)

Tai Si encountering a qilin, depicted in Jiao Bingzhen's Virtuous Empresses and Empresses Dowager in Successive Dynasties (Qing dynasty, 18th century)

Tai Si encountering a qilin, depicted in Jiao Bingzhen's Virtuous Empresses and Empresses Dowager in Successive Dynasties (Qing dynasty, 18th century)

Queen Mother of the West Riding a Kirin, Kanō Kyūseki (Edo period, early 18th century)

Queen Mother of the West Riding a Kirin, Kanō Kyūseki (Edo period, early 18th century)

A qilin at the Ming tombs in the dragon, fish, and ox style (Ming dynasty, c. 15th-17th century)

A qilin at the Ming tombs in the dragon, fish, and ox style (Ming dynasty, c. 15th-17th century)

See also

Chinese spiritual world concepts

Chinthe

Four Holy Beasts

Kanglasha

Longma

Nian

Nongshaba

Pakhangba

Pixiu

Poubi Lai

Questing Beast

Serpopard

Shaanxi Kylins

Shisa

Singha

Sin-you

Taoroinai

Xiezhi

Yali

References

"qilin (Chinese mythology)". Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved 24 July 2011.

Classic of Poetry "Airs of Zhou and the South – Lin's Feet" translated by James Legge Durrant, Li, & Schaberg (translators) (2016). Zuo tradition: Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals. Seattle & London: University of Washington Press. p. 1920, n. 292. quote: "It is significant that the earliest source known to mention the lin itself is “Lin zhi

zhi” 麟之趾, or “The Foot of the Lin”

Kong, Qiu. Eds.(2016). 诗经 [The She King] (Legge, J. & Shi J.H. Transl.). 中州古籍出版社 [Zhongzhou Ancient Books Publishing House]. ISBN 978-7-5348-6422-3.

古建上的主要装饰纹样——麒麟 古建园林技术—作者:徐华铛 Archived 30 September 2007 at the Wayback Machine

Zuozhuan "Duke Ai – 14th year – jing & zhuan"

Durrant, Li, & Schaberg (translators) (2016). Zuo tradition: Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals. pp. 1919–1921

ChinaKnowledge.de

SWJZ Radical 鹿" quote: "麟: 大牝鹿也。……麒: 仁獸也。麋身牛尾, 一角。……麇: 牝麒也。" translation: "Lín (麟): a large female deer. [...] Qí (麒): a humane beast. With elaphure's body, ox's tail, and one horn. [...] Lín (麇): female qí."

Parker, Jeannie Thomas (2018) The Mythic Chinese unicorn. Victoria: Friesen Press. p. 44

此“麟”非彼“麟” 专家称萨摩麟并非传说中麒麟

"What Kind of Animal Was the Questing Beast?". *Arthuriana*. 14 (2): 66–69. 2004. ISSN 1078-6279. JSTOR 27870605.

Wilson, Samuel M. (December 1992). "The Emperor's Giraffe". *Natural History*. Vol. 101, no. 12. pp. 22–25. Archived from the original on 2 December 2008. Retrieved 14 April 2012.

Parker, J. T.: "The Mythic Chinese Unicorn"

Janhunen, J. (2011). "Unicorn, Mammoth, Whale: mythological and etymological connections of zoonyms in North and East Asia". *Linguistics, Archaeology and the Human Past, Occasional Paper*, 12, 189–222.

"Хирс in Bolor dictionary". Archived from the original on 26 September 2022. Retrieved 31 January 2019.

"Charger with a qilin, anonymous, c. 1350". Rijksmuseum. Retrieved 15 May 2022.

Liscomb, Kathryn (2016). "9: How the Giraffe Became a Qilin: Intercultural Signification in Ming Dynasty Arts". *The Zoomorphic Imagination in Chinese Art and Culture*. University of Hawai'i Press. pp. 341–378. ISBN 9780824872564.

Bush, Susan (2016). "2: Labeling the Creatures: Some Problems in Han and Six Dynasties Iconography". *The Zoomorphic Imagination in Chinese Art and Culture*. University of Hawai'i Press. pp. 76–77. ISBN 9780824872564.

Yoshida, Masako (2014). "Trade Stories: Chinese Export Embroideries in the Metropolitan Museum". *Metropolitan Museum Journal*. 49 (1): 4–5. doi:10.1086/680031. JSTOR 10.1086/680031. S2CID 192217718.

"5 Yuan, China". en.numista.com. Numista. Retrieved 13 December 2017.

Griffis, William Elliot (2007). *The Religions of Japan*. Bibliobazaar. p. 39. ISBN 978-1-4264-9918-0.

기린 : 네이버캐스트

"Taep Payatarn Riding Qilin Himapant Lion Hlang Yant – Nuea Pong Maha Sanaeh Luan – Ajarn Warut – Wat Pong Wonaram". Buddha Magic Multimedia & Publications. Retrieved 12 January 2016.

Pralongchoeng, Gilen (20 September 2014). "มังกร" [Dragon horse]. Thai Rath (in Thai). Retrieved 7 August 2021.

"The people of Wufu are prosperous and the auspicious beasts are coming— Talking about the Hakka Kirin Dance". Archived from the original on 25 March 2017.

Lo, Wai Ling (1 June 2022). "Recreating Local Tradition: The Study of the Hang Hau Hakka Unicorn Dance in Hong Kong". *Asian Studies, the Twelfth International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS 12)*. 1: 401–406.

doi:10.5117/9789048557820/icas.2022.047. ISBN 9789048557820. ISSN 2949-6721.

"What Is The Qilin Dance?". Google Arts & Culture. Retrieved 10 October 2023.

External links

Media related to Qilin at Wikimedia Commons

vte

Chinese mythology

vte

Japanese folklore

Categories: Chinese legendary creaturesFour Holy BeastsJapanese legendary creaturesKorean legendary creaturesMythological deerUnicorns

This page was last edited on 25 November 2025, at 19:57 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

List of death deities

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Death-worship" redirects here. For the fictional ideology, see Political geography of Nineteen Eighty-Four § Eastasia.

Yama, the Hindu god of death and justice, and Lord of Naraka (hell). He was subsequently adopted by Buddhist, Chinese, Tibetan, Korean, and Japanese mythology as the king of hell.

Maya death god "A" way as a hunter, Classic period

The mythology or religion of most cultures incorporate a god of death or, more frequently, a divine being closely associated with death, an afterlife, or an underworld. They are often amongst the most powerful and important entities in a given tradition, reflecting the fact that death, like birth, is central to the human experience. In religions where a single god is the primary object of worship, the representation of death is usually that god's antagonist, and the struggle between the two is central to the folklore of the culture. In such dualistic models, the primary deity usually represents good, and the death god embodies evil. Similarly, death worship is used as a derogatory term to accuse certain groups of morally abhorrent practices which set no value on human life. In monotheistic religions, death is commonly personified by an angel or demon standing in opposition to the god.

Occurrence

In polytheistic religions which have a complex system of deities governing various natural phenomena and aspects of human life, it is common to have a deity who is assigned the function of presiding over death. This deity may actually take the life of humans or, more commonly, simply rule over the afterlife in that particular belief system (a single religion may have separate deities performing both tasks). The deity in question may be good, evil, or neutral and simply doing their job, in sharp contrast to a

lot of modern portrayals of death deities as all being inherently evil just because death is feared. Hades from Greek mythology is an especially common target. The inclusion of such a "departmental" deity of death in a religion's pantheon is not necessarily the same thing as the glorification of death.

A death deity has a good chance of being either male or female, unlike some functions that seem to steer towards one gender in particular, such as fertility and earth deities being female and storm deities being male. A single religion/mythology may have death gods of more than one gender existing at the same time and they may be envisioned as a married couple ruling over the afterlife together, as with the Aztecs, Greeks, and Romans.

In monotheistic religions, the one god governs both life and death (as well as everything else). However, in practice this manifests in different rituals and traditions and varies according to a number of factors including geography, politics, traditions, and the influence of other religions.

Africa and the Middle East

Section of the Book of the Dead for the scribe Hunefer, depicting the Weighing of the Heart in Duat, featuring the deities Anubis, Ammit and Thoth

Sub-Sahara Africa

Igbo

Ala (Igbo mythology)

Ogbunabali (Igbo mythology)

Yoruba

Eshu (Yoruba religion)

Iku (god) (Yoruba religion)

Akan

Owuo, Akan God of Death and Destruction, and the Personification of death. Name means death in the Akan language.

Asase Yaa, one half of an Akan Goddess of the barren places on Earth, Truth and is Mother of the Dead

Amokye, Psychopomp in Akan religion who fishes the souls of the dead from the river leading to Asamando, the Akan underworld

Nkrabea, The deity of destiny and fate, believed to influence human fortunes and life paths, as well as their deaths.

Afroasiatic Africa

Somali

Huur, a messenger of Death who had the form of a large bird similar to Horus of ancient Egypt.

Afroasiatic Middle East

Canaanite

Mot

Egyptian

Aker (Egyptian mythology)

Andjety, an old Egyptian god

Anubis, guardian of the dead,[1] mummification, and the afterlife in ancient Egyptian religion

Aqen, a rarely mentioned deity in the Book of the Dead

Assessors of Maat, charged with judging the souls of the dead in the afterlife

Duamutef, one of the four sons of Horus

Hapi, one of the four sons of Horus

Imset, one of the four sons of Horus

Kherty Egyptian earth god

Medjed, an unusual looking god mentioned in the Book of the Dead

Nephthys (NebetHuet), Anubis' mother; sister of Osiris and Isis (Aset); also a guardian of the dead. She was believed to also escort dead souls to Osiris

Nehebkau, the primordial snake and funerary god associated with the afterlife, and one of the forty-two assessors of Maat

Osiris, lord of the Underworld[2]

Qebehsenuef, one of the four sons of Horus

Seker, a falcon god of the Memphite necropolis who was known as a patron of the living, as well as a god of the dead. He is known to be closely tied to Osiris

Serapis, Graeco-Egyptian syncretistic deity, combining elements of Osiris, the Apis Bull, Hades, Demeter, and Dionysus. Also, patron of the Ptolemaic Kingdom and Alexandria

Wepwawet, a wolf god of war, and brother of Anubis, being seen as one who opened the ways to, and through, Duat, for the spirits of the dead

Mesopotamian

Ereshkigal (Sumerian mythology, Akkadian mythology, Babylonian mythology),[3][4] first lady of the Underworld

Namtar (Sumerian mythology, Akkadian mythology, Babylonian mythology), Ereshkigal's sukkal.

Nergal (Sumerian mythology, Akkadian mythology, Babylonian mythology), second lord of the Underworld

Inshushinak (Elamite mythology; also present in the Mesopotamian An-Anum god list. [5])

Nungal (Babylonian mythology), daughter of Ereshkigal

Erra (god)

Ugur (Hurrian religion;[6] also a sukkal of Nergal[7])

Ninazu

Ningishzida

Allani

Enmesharra, a primordial deity described as "lord of the underworld"

Kanisurra, a goddess whose name is derived from the term "ganzer," referring to the underworld (Mesopotamian)

Shuwala, a goddess of Hurrian origin worshipped in Ur

Lagamal, minor underworld deity

Birtum, husband of Manungal

Western Eurasia

European

Albanian

Djall, symbolizes the devil. (Djaj(plural))

Mortja, personification of death. An equivalent of Grim Reaper.(Female)(Mortjet, plural)

Vdekja, personification of death. (Female)

Balto-Finnic

Tuoni (Finnish mythology, Estonian mythology)

Balto-Slavic

Giltinė (Lithuanian mythology)

Māra (Latvian mythology)

Morana (Slavic mythology)

Peckols (Prussian mythology)

Peklenc

Veles

Chernobog (Slavic mythology)

Basque

Herio (Basque mythology)

Celtic

Ankou (Breton people)

Arawn

Cichol

Crom Cruach

Donn

Mannanan

The Morrigan

Scáthach Goddess of the dead

Germanic

See also: Death in Norse paganism

Rán uses her net to pull a seafarer into the depths in an illustration by Johannes Gehrts, 1901

Freyja, presides over Fólkvangr; chooses half of those who die in battle

Gefjon, a goddess who oversees those who die as virgins

Hel,[8][9] goddess of the dead and ruler of the land of the same name, Hel,

Odin[8][9] presides over Valhalla and gets half of those who die in battle; there they train for Ragnarök

Rán, the sea goddess who collects the drowned in her net

Etruscan

Aita, god of the underworld

Culga, a female underworld spirit

Februus, god of purification, death, the underworld, and riches

Mani, spirits of the dead

Mania, goddess of the dead

Mantus, god of the underworld

Orcus, god of the underworld

Tuchulcha, an underworld spirit
Vanth, winged spirit of the underworld
Greek

Hades or Serapis with his dog Cerberus
Achlys, goddess who symbolizes the mist of death. Goddess of poisons, personification of misery and sadness.
Apollo, god of diseases
Atropos, one of the moirai, who cut the thread of life.
Charon, a daimon who acted as ferryman of the dead.
Erebus, the primordial god of darkness, his mists encircled the underworld and filled the hollows of the earth
Erinyes, chthonic deities of vengeance
Hades, king of the underworld and god of the dead[10]
Hecate, goddess of witchcraft, she helped Demeter in the search for Persephone and was allowed to live in the Underworld as her magic works best at night
Hermes, the messenger god who acted as psychopompos
Hypnos, personification of sleep, twin of Thanatos, his Roman counterpart is Somnus
Keres, goddesses of violent death, sisters of Thanatos
Lampades, torch-bearing underworld nymphs
Limos was the goddess of starvation in ancient Greek religion. She was opposed by Demeter, goddess of grain and the harvest with whom Ovid wrote Limos could never meet, and Plutus, the god of wealth and the bounty of rich harvests.[1]
Persephone, queen of the underworld; wife of Hades and goddess of spring growth[11]
Serapis, Graeco-Egyptian syncretistic deity, combining elements of Osiris, the Apis Bull, Hades, Demeter, and Dionysus. Also, patron of the Ptolemaic Kingdom and Alexandria.
Tartarus, the darkest, deepest part of the underworld, often used for imprisoning enemies of the Olympians
Thanatos, personification of death, Roman counterpart is Mors[12]
Gods of the seven rivers of the underworld:
Acheron, god of the river Acheron
Alpheus, god of the river Alpheus
Cocytus, god of the river Cocytus
Eridanos, god of the river Eridanos
Lethe, goddess of the river Lethe
Phlegethon, god of the river Phlegethon
Styx, goddess of the river Styx, a river that formed a boundary between the living and the dead
Roman
Dea Tacita, goddess of the dead
Di inferi, ancient Roman deities associated with death and the Underworld
Dis Pater, god of the underworld
Laverna, goddess of thieves, cheats, and the underworld
Lemures, the malevolent dead
Libitina, goddess of funerals and burials

Manes, spirits of the dead
Mania, goddess of death
Mors, personification of death, Greek equivalent is Thanatos
Nenia Dea, goddess of funerals
Orcus, punisher of broken oaths; usually folded in with Pluto
Pluto, ruler of the Underworld
Proserpina, queen of the underworld
Soranus, underworld Sabine god adopted by the Romans
Viduus, god who separated the soul and body after death
Western Asia
Elamite
Inshushinak
Persian-Zoroastrian
Angra Mainyu or Ahriman, the destructive spirit (Persian mythology)[13]
Asto Vidatu or Astiwihad or Asto-widhatu, death deity (Persian mythology)[14]
Ossetian

Aminon, gatekeeper of the underworld.
Barastyr, ruler of the underworld.
Ishtar-Deela, lord of the underworld in Nakh.[15]
Uralic
Azyren (Mari people)
Kalma, Finnish goddess of death and decay, her name meaning "the stench of corpses"[16]
Nga (Nenets)
Tuoni (Finnish mythology), with his wife and children.[17]
Eastern Asia
Korean
Yeom-ra, or Great King Yeom-ra' (King Yama)
Chinese
Yanluo Wang

Yanluo Wang
Emperor(s) of Youdu (Capital City of the Underworld)

Di Guan Da Di
Dong Yue Da Di
Feng Du Da Di
Yanluo Wang (King Yama)
Meng Po
Judges of the Ten Underworld Courts

Jiang Ziwen
Bao Zheng
Dong Ji

Huang Xile

The rest only have surnames including Li, Yu, Lu, Bi, Lu and Xue.

Four Kings of the Underworld

Bao Zheng

Han Qinhu

Fan Zhongyan

Kou Zhun

Ghost Kings of the Five Regions

Cai Yulei

Zhao He

Zhang Heng

Duzi Ren

Zhou Qi

Ghost Kings of the Five Regions (Ver.2)

Shen Cha

Yang Yun

Yan Di (Shenlong)

Ji Kang

Immortal Wang

Governors of Fengdu

Deng Ai

Ji Ming

Imperial Censor of Fengdu

Han Yi

Zeng Yuanshan

Jiao Zhongqing

Ma Zhong

Song Youqing

Guan Yu (note: different from the famous general of three kingdoms)

Wu Lun

Tu Cha

Four Generals of the Direct Altar of Fengdu

Ma Sheng

Ma Chuanzhong

Chen Yuanbo

Guo Zhongyou

Eight Generals of the Inner Altar of Fengdu

Wei Tin, Ghost Capturing General
Liu Chu, Ghost Restraining General
Wang Jian, Ghost Flailing General
Meng E, Ghost Interrogating General
Che Zi, Guardian of the East Gate
Xia Dali, Guardian of the West Gate
Lie Weizhi, Guardian of the South Gate
Sang Tongguai, Guardian of the North Gate
Eight Generals of the Outer Altar of Fengdu

Zhang Yuanlian
Chen Yuanqing
Li Yuande
Fan YuanZhang
Du YuanZhen
Liu Yuanfu
Chang Yuan
Jia Taoyuan
Ten Masters of the Underworld

A Bang, Bull Head
Luo Cha, Horse Face
Xie Bi'an, Wondering God of the Day
Fan Wujiu, Wondering God of the Night
Hei Wuchang (Black Impermanence)
Bai Wuchang (White Impermanence)
Huangfeng (responsible for insects)
Paowei (responsible for animals)
Yusai (responsible for fishes)
Guaiwang (responsible for Hungry Ghosts)
(Note: in some versions, Xie Bi'an and Fanjiu are the Bai Wuchang and Hei Wuchang, respectively.)

Four Strongmen of Fengdu

Zhang Yuanzhen, Taiyi Strongman
Hu Wenzhong, Tri-day Strongman
Sun Zhongwu, Demon-smiting Strongman
Tang Bocheng, Ghost-smiting Strongman
Two Agents of Fengdu

Xun Gongda, Great God of the Black Sky
Liu Guangzhong, Great God of the Black Fog
Wardens of the Nine Prison of Fengdu

Wang Yuanzhen
Zhen Yan
Yao Quan
Shi Tong
Zhou Sheng
Diao Xiao
Kong Sheng
Wu Yan
Wang Tong
Administers of the Six Paths of Rebirth of Fengdu

Cao Qing, Administer of the Path of Heaven
Tien Yan, Administer of the Path of Ghosts
Cui Cong, Administer of the Path of Earth
Ji Bie, Administer of the Path of Gods
Chen De, Administer of the Path of Hungry Ghosts
Gao Ren, Administer of the Path of Beasts
Judges of Fengdu

Cui (Chief Judge)

Wang Fu
Ban Jian
Zi He
Jia Yuan
Zhao Sheng
Zhang Qi
Yang Tong
Fu Po
Zhu Shun
Li Gong
Xue Zhong
Rong Zhen
Lu Zhongce
Chen Xun
Huang Shou
Zhou Bi
Bian Shen
Cheng De
Liu Bao
Dong Jie
Guo Yuan
Japanese

Izanami, when she died she became queen of the underworld, Yomi, and goddess of the dead.

Enma, god and ruler of the dead in Japanese Buddhism

Shinigami, god of death

Susanoo

Ōkuninushi, an alternate ruler of the underworld

North and Central Asian mythology

Erlik (Turkic mythology)

Xargi (Siberian mythology)

Oceanian mythology

Wuluwaid (Australian Aboriginal mythology)

Degei (Fijian mythology)

Hine-nui-te-pō (Maori mythology)

Whiro (Maori mythology)

South Asian mythology

See also: Shmashana Adhipati

Hindu

Yama - the god of death & divine judge of afterlife

Chitragupta - Yama's record keeper, keeps account of the good & misdeeds of souls, on the basis of which the dead are judged.

Yamaduta - Spirits under control of Yama, who are responsible for bringing the dead souls into Yama's presence. However, from the anecdote of Satyavan & Savitri, it is shown that even Yama performs this role.

Kāla - the personification of time, also associated with death

Shiva - the god who is the destroyer of the world at the time of pralaya. As Kalantaka, he is also the conqueror of death. As Bhairava, he is strongly associated with death & destruction.

Kali - Shiva's spouse, strongly associated with death & destruction.

Chamunda - A related form of Kali, invoked for seeking death of enemies during wartime.

Tibetan Buddhist

Tibetan Buddhism, like all other Buddhist denominations, affirms the rejection of the existence of souls (anatta) & existence of a creator God (see the theory of dependent origination), while at the same time affirming in the existence of heaven and hell. The beings listed here aren't 'gods of death' in the traditional sense, they are rather beings that invoke a lot of funerary aspect with them.

Citipati - guardian spirits of charnel grounds

Dakini - Female spirits strongly associated with the imagery of death.

Heruka - Beings strongly associated with the imagery of death & charnel grounds

Wrathful deities - Meditational deities invoking the imagery of death.

Southeast Asian mythology

Magwayen

Batara Kala (Balinese mythology), god of the underworld in traditional Javanese and Balinese mythology, ruling over it in a cave along with Setesuyara. Batara Kala is also named the creator of light and the earth. He is also the god of time and destruction, who devours unlucky people. He is related to Hindu concept of Kāla. In mythology, he causes eclipses by trying to eat the Sun or the Moon.

Shingon (nat) (Burmese)

Thongalel (Manipuri mythology)

Pong Lalondong (Toraja), god of death

Philippines

Main article: List of Philippine mythological figures

Tagbayan (Ifugao mythology): divinities associated with death that feast on human souls that are guarded by two headed monsters called kikilan[18]

Fulor (Ifugao mythology): a wood carved into an image of a dead person seated on a death chair; an antique which a spirit in it, who bring sickness, death, and unsuccessful crops when sacrifices are not offered[19]

Kabunyan (Kalanguya mythology): the almighty creator; also referred to as Agmattebew, the spirit who could not be seen; the mabaki ritual is held in the deity's honor during planting, harvesting, birth and death of the people, and other activities for livelihood[20]

Binangewan (Aeta mythology): spirits who bring change, sickness, and death as punishment[21]

Aring Sinukuan (Kapampangan mythology): sun god of war and death, taught the early inhabitants the industry of metallurgy, wood cutting, rice culture and even waging war[22]

Lakandánup (Kapampangan mythology): serpent goddess who comes during total eclipses; followed by famine; eats a person's shadow, which will result in withering and death; daughter of Aring Sinukuan and Dápu[23]

Sidapa (Bisaya mythology): the goddess of death; co-ruler of the middleworld called Kamaritaan, together with Makaptan[18]

Sidapa (Hiligaynon mythology): god who lives in the sacred Mount Madia-as; determines the day of a person's death by marking every newborn's lifespan on a very tall tree on Madya-as[24]

Hangin (Hiligaynon mythology): the spirits of the death wind; takes the life of the elderly[24]

Patag'aes (Suludnon mythology): awaits until midnight then enters the house to have a conversation with the living infant; if he discovers someone is eavesdropping, he will choke the child to death; their conversation creates the fate of the child, on how long the child wants to live and how the child will eventually die, where the child will always get to choose the answers; once done, Patag'aes takes out his measuring stick, computes the

child's life span, and then departs, sealing the child's fate[25]

Pamulak Manobo (Bagobo mythology): supreme deity who controls good harvest, rain, wind, life, and death; in some myths, the chief deity is simply referred as the male deity, Diwata[18]

Malakal Maut (Maranao mythology): the angel of death; takes the souls of someone after three to seven days from the falling of the person's leaf from the sacred Sadiarathul Montaha tree in the realm called Sorga; appears either a handsome prince or a grotesque monsters, depending if the soul he is getting comes from a sinner or a virtuous person; punishes the souls of sinners until final judgment, while lifting up the souls of the good onto heaven[26]

Kumakatok - hooded and cloaked harbingers of death that would knock on doors of the dying in Tagalog mythology

Magwayen - the goddess of afterlife and the first ocean deity, according to Visayan mythology. Known for being the goddess who collects souls and takes them to Sulad with her boat. The souls are initially transferred to her via Pandaki, who gets the soul from Sidapa.

Sitan - god and caretaker of the underworld realm for evil souls known as Kasamaan in Tagalog mythology. Maca, the realm of the good dead, is jointly ruled by Sitan and Bathala.

Manduyapit - bring souls across a red river in Manobo mythology[27]

Mama Guayen - ferries souls to the end of the world in Ilonggo mythology[27]

Badadum - deity in Waray mythology that gathers family members at the mouth of a river to make a farewell to the deceased[27]

Vietnam

Diêm Vương (King Yama)

Mạnh Bà

Hắc Bạch Vô Thường, two spirits capture souls.

Đầu Trâu

Mặt Ngựa

American mythology

Mictlāntēcutli

Mictēcacihuātl as depicted in the Codex Borgia

Aztec

Cihuateteo (Aztec mythology), Divine women. Spirits of women who died during labor.

Coatlicue (Aztec mythology), minor goddess of death, as well as the goddess of life and rebirth

Itztlacoliuhqui (Aztec mythology), personification of winter-as-death

Mictēcacihuatl (Aztec mythology),[28] the chief death goddess; Queen of Mictlan (underworld) or Lady of the Dead

Mictlantecuhtli (Aztec mythology), the chief death god; lord of the Underworld[29]

Tlaloc (Aztec mythology), water god and minor death god; ruler of Tlalocan, a separate underworld for those who died from drowning

Xipe Totec (Aztec mythology), hero god, death god; inventor of warfare and master of

plagues

Xolotl (Aztec mythology), god of sunset, fire, lightning, and death

Cahuilla

Muut

Guarani

Luisson, Guarani mythology

Haida

Ta'xet, Haida mythology

Tia (goddess)

Inca

Supay (Inca mythology)

Vichama (Inca mythology)

Inuit

Aipaloovik

Pana

Latin American Folk Catholicism

Santa Muerte, folk saint and goddess of death in Mexico

San La Muerte, folk saint and god of death in Paraguay, Argentina, and Brazil

San Pascualito, folk saint and god of death in Guatemala and Mexico

Maya

Camazotz, bat god who resides in the underworld

Cizin

Ixtab

Xtabay

Maya death gods known under various names (Hunhau, Uacmitun Ahau, Ah Puch, Kisin, Yum Kimil)

Narragansett

Chepi

Taíno

Maquetaurie Guayaba

Opiel Guabiron

Umbanda and Candomblé

Exu caveira

Exu Tranca-rua das almas

Haitian Vodou

Gede Iwa

Baron Samedi, Baron La Croix, Baron Cimetiere, Baron Kriminel

Ghede Nibo

Maman Brigitte

See also

Afterlife

Death (personification)

Liminal deity

List of deities

List of night deities
List of fictional demons
List of theological demons
List of ghosts
Psychopomp
Time and fate deities
Sailor Saturn
Veneration of the dead
References

"Anubis - Anubis AKA Inpu, Anupu, or Ienpw". Archived from the original on 2012-10-26. Retrieved 2012-10-30.

"Anubis - Osiris AKA Un-nefer, or Khenti-Amentiu". Archived from the original on 2012-05-26. Retrieved 2012-10-30.

"The counterpart to these deities of sky, air, water, and earth was the underworld, the realm of the dead, originally seen as ruled by the powerful Goddess Ereshkigal."

Ruether, Rosemary Radford. *Goddesses and the Divine Feminine: A Western Religious History*. Berkeley: University of California Press. ISBN 0-520-23146-5

"After consulting his mistress Ereshkigal, the queen of the Nether World, he admits Ishtar" Kramer, "Ishtar in the Nether World According to a New Sumerian Text" *Bulletin of the American Schools of Oriental Research*. 1940. Google scholar results as the JSTOR link is unlikely to be universally available.

F. Wiggermann, *Transtigridian Snake Gods* [in:] I. L. Finkel, M. J. Geller (eds.), *Sumerian Gods and their Representations*, 1997, p. 34

M. Krebern timer, *dU.GUR* [in] *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* vol 14, 2014, p. 297

F. Wiggerman, *Nergal A. philologisch* [in:] *Reallexikon der Assyriologie und vorderasiatischen Archäologie* vol. 9, 1998, p. 220

Kveldulf Gundarsson. (1993, 2005) *Our Troth*. ISBN 0-9770165-0-1

The dwelling one went to after death varied depending on where one died, at the battlefield or not. If not at the battlefield, one would go to Hel (not to be confused with the Christian Hell). Of the slain at the battlefield, some went to Fólkvangr, the dwelling of Freyja and some went to Valhalla, the dwelling of Odin (see *Grímnismál*). The ninth hall is Folkvang, where bright Freyja. Decides where the warriors shall sit. Some of the fallen belong to her. And some belong to Odin.

"HADES (Haides) - Greek God of the Dead, King of the Underworld (Roman Pluto)". *Theoi.com*. Retrieved 6 November 2021.

"Classical Mythology: Hades Takes a Wife: Persephone". *InfoPlease*. Retrieved 25 March 2018.

"THANATOS - Greek God of Death (Roman Mors)". *Theoi.com*. Retrieved 25 March 2018.

Duchesne-Guillemin, Jacques (1982), "Ahriman", *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vol. 1, New York: Routledge & Kegan Paul, pp. 670–673

Micha F. Lindemans (27 July 1997), "Astro Vidatu", *Encyclopedia Mythica*

Jaimoukha, Amjad M. (2005-03-01). *The Chechens: a handbook* (1st ed.). Routledge. p. 110. ISBN 978-0-415-32328-4. Retrieved 2009-08-14.

"KALMA - the Finnish Goddess of Death (Finnish mythology)". godchecker.com. Retrieved 25 March 2018.

"TUONI - the Finnish God of the Underworld (Finnish mythology)". godchecker.com. Retrieved 25 March 2018.

Jocano, F. L. (1969). *Philippine Mythology*. Quezon City: Capitol Publishing House Inc.
Bimmolog, H., Sallong, L., Montemayor, L. (2005). *The Deities of the Animistic Religion of Mayaoyao, Ifugao*.

Cayat, G. C. Manuscript on Kalanguya Cultural Communities. National Commission for Culture and the Arts.

Arbues, L. R. (1960). *Philippine Sociological Review* Vol. 8, No. 1/2: The Negritos as a Minority Group in the Philippines. Philippine Sociological Society.

Nicdao, A. (1917). *Pampangan Folklore*. Manila.

Pangilinan, M. (2014–2020). *An Introduction to the Kapampáŋan Language; Interview on Láwû. Sínúpan Singing: Center for Kapampáŋan Cultural Heritage*.

Loarca, Miguel de. (1582) 1903. *Relation of the Filipinas Islands*. In Blair and Robertson, *The Philippine Islands* 5.

Jocano, F. L. (1968). *Sulod Society*. Quezon City: U.P. Press.

Talaguit, C. J. N. (2019). *Folk-Islam in Maranao Society*. History Department, De La Salle University – Manila.

"Psychopomps (Death Guides) of the Philippines". Aswangproject.com. 9 March 2017. Retrieved 6 November 2021.

"Mictecacihuatl | Goddess a Day". Archived from the original on 2013-03-15. Retrieved 2012-10-30.

"Mictlantecuhli, Lord of the Land of the Death". Azteccalendar.com. Retrieved 6 November 2021.

vte

Death

vte

Lists of mythological figures

Categories: Death deitiesComparative mythologyLists of deities

This page was last edited on 14 December 2025, at 21:27 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

Category:Mythology-related lists

Category

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

Tools

[Help](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

[Lists portal](#)

[Mythology portal](#)

Subcategories

This category has the following 5 subcategories, out of 5 total.

A

[Lists of animals in mythology and religion \(4 P\)](#)

C

[Lists of legendary creatures \(3 C, 49 P\)](#)

D

[Lists of deities \(83 P\)](#)

G

[Germanic paganism and mythology lists \(13 P\)](#)

[Greek mythology-related lists \(15 P\)](#)

Pages in category "Mythology-related lists"

The following 30 pages are in this category, out of 30 total. This list may not reflect recent changes.

*

[List of mythologies](#)

A

[List of Asian mythologies](#)

[Aztec creator gods](#)

B

[List of Basque mythological figures](#)

[List of mythology books and sources](#)

C

[List of creation myths](#)

[List of culture heroes](#)

D

[List of Australian Aboriginal mythological figures](#)

[List of Irish mythological figures](#)

[List of Māori deities](#)

[List of Mesopotamian deities](#)

[List of Yoruba deities](#)

[List of demigods](#)

[E](#)

[Index of Egyptian mythology articles](#)

[F](#)

[List of flood myths](#)

[G](#)

[Greek primordial deities](#)

[H](#)

[List of Hurrian deities](#)

[I](#)

[List of people claimed to be immortal in myth and legend](#)

[L](#)

[List of legendary creatures by type](#)

[M](#)

[List of Maya gods and supernatural beings](#)

[List of creatures in Meitei culture](#)

[O](#)

[List of mythological objects](#)

[P](#)

[List of mythological pairs](#)

[List of mythological places](#)

[List of protoplasts in religion](#)

[R](#)

[List of rape victims from ancient history and mythology](#)

[List of Roman deities](#)

[U](#)

[List of Ugaritic deities](#)

[V](#)

[List of vampiric creatures in folklore](#)

[Y](#)

[List of Yazidi holy figures](#)

[Categories: Mythology](#)[Religion-related lists](#)[Cultural lists](#)

[Hidden category: Automatic category TOC generates no TOC](#)

This page was last edited on 27 April 2020, at 01:31 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

Powered by [MediaWiki](#)

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

List of mythological objects

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
icon

This article needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

Find sources: "List of mythological objects" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (June 2017) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

This list is incomplete; you can help by adding missing items. (August 2008)

Sampo, a magical artifact of indeterminate type constructed by Ilmarinen that brought riches and good fortune to its holder, in the Finnish epic poetry Kalevala (The Forging of the Sampo, Joseph Alanen, 1911)

Mythological objects encompass a variety of items (e.g. weapons, armor, clothing) found in mythology, legend, folklore, tall tale, fable, religion, spirituality, superstition, paranormal, and pseudoscience from across the world. This list is organized according to the category of object.

Armor

Armor

Achilles wearing his armor

Armor of Achilles, created by Hephaestus and said to be impenetrable. (Greek mythology)

Armor of Beowulf, a mail shirt made by Wayland the Smith. (Anglo-Saxon mythology)

Armor of Örvar-Oddr, an impenetrable "silken mailcoat". (Norse mythology)

Babr-e Bayan, a suit of armor that Rostam wore in wars described in the Persian epic Shahnameh. The armor was invulnerable against fire, water and weapons. (Persian

mythology)

Golden Coat of Chainmail, part of Fafnir's treasure which Sigurd took after he slew the dragon. (Norse mythology)

Green Armor, protects the wearer from physical injuries. (Arthurian legend)

Kavacha, the armor of Karna that was granted to him by his father Surya at birth. (Hindu mythology)

Armor of Diomedes, made of bronze, that Diomedes exchanged with the golden armor of Glaucus. (Greek mythology)

Helmets

Helmet of Rostam, upon which was fixed the head of the white giant Div-e-Sepid, from the Persian epic Shahnameh. (Persian mythology)

Helm of Awe (also Helm of Terror or Ægishjálmr), an Icelandic magical stave. A physical object called "Helm of Terror" is referenced as one item Sigurd takes from the dragon Fafnir's hoard after he slays him in the Völsunga saga. (Norse mythology)

Huliðshjálmr, a concealing helmet of the dwarves. (Norse mythology)

Tarnhelm, a magic helmet giving the wearer the ability to change form or become invisible. Used by Alberich in Der Ring des Nibelungen. (Continental Germanic mythology)

Goswhit, the helmet of King Arthur, passed down to him from Uther Pendragon. (Arthurian legend)

Sun Wukong's magical headband, a magical headband which, once put on, can never be removed. With a special chant, the band will tighten and cause unbearable pain. (Chinese mythology)

Kappa's plate (Kappa no sara), the easiest way to defeat a kappa is to make it spill the water from the sara on top of its head. The sara is filled with water that is the source of its power. (Japanese mythology)

Headgear from Greek mythology

Cap of invisibility (also Helm of Darkness or Helm of Hades), which can turn the wearer invisible. In addition to its owner, the god of the underworld Hades, wearers of the cap in Greek myths include Athena, the goddess of wisdom; the messenger god Hermes, and the hero Perseus.

Ariadne's diadem, a diadem given to her by her husband Dionysus that was made by Hephaestus as a wedding present.

Shields

Shield of El Cid, a shield which bears the image of a fierce shining golden dragon.[1]

Svalinn, a shield which stands before the sun and protects Earth from burning. If the shield were to fall from its frontal position, the mountains and seas would burn up.

(Norse mythology)

Dubán, the shield of Cú Chulainn. (Irish mythology)

Han Feizi's shield, from a Chinese parable that tells of a man who was trying to sell a spear and a shield. When asked how good his spear was, he claimed it could pierce any shield. Then, when asked how good his shield was, he claimed it could defend from all spear attacks. When he was asked what would happen if his spear should strike his shield, the seller could not answer. This led to the idiom of "zìxiāng máodùn" (自相矛盾, "from each-other spear shield"), or "self-contradictory". (Chinese folklore)

Oba's shield, which she uses to cover her right ear. (Yoruba mythology)

Shields from Arthurian legend

Pridwen (also Wynebgwrthucher), the shield of King Arthur.

Shield of Joseph of Arimathea, according to Arthurian legend, was carried by three maidens to Arthur's castle where it was discovered by Sir Percival. In Perlesvaus he uses it to defeat the Knight of the Burning Dragon.

Shield of Judas Maccabee, a red shield emblazoned with a golden eagle. According to Arthurian legend the same shield was later found and used by Gawain after he defeated an evil knight.

Shield of Evalach, a white shield belonging to King Evalach. Josephus of Arimathea painted a red cross upon it with his own blood, which granted the owner heavenly protection. It was later won by Sir Galahad.

Shields from Græco-Roman mythology

Shield of Achilles (illustration)

Aegis, Zeus' shield, often loaned to his daughter Athena, also used by Perseus. (Greek mythology)

Shield of Ajax, a huge shield made of seven cow-hides with a layer of bronze. (Greek mythology)

Ancile, the shield of the Roman god Mars. One divine shield fell from heaven during the reign of Numa Pompilius, the second king of Rome. He ordered eleven copies made to confuse would-be thieves. (Roman mythology)

Shield of Achilles, the shield that Achilles uses in his fight with Hector. (Greek mythology)

Shield of Aeneas, the shield that Aeneas receives from Vulcan to aid in his war against Turnus.

Shields from Hindu mythology

Khetaka, the shield of Shamba.

Srivatsa, the shield of Vishnu, said to be manifested in the god's chest.

Gauntlets

Járngreipr (Iron Grippers), a pair of iron gauntlets used by the god Thor. (Norse mythology)

Clothing

Crowns

The Crown of Immortality, held by the allegorical figure Eterna (Eternity)

Crown of Immortality, represented in art first as a laurel wreath and later as a symbolic circle of stars. It appears in a number of Baroque iconographic and allegoric works of art to indicate the wearer's immortality. (Christian mythology)

Conquest's crown, the first of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse, Conquest, rides a white horse and a crown was given to him. (Christian mythology)

Crown of twelve stars, the Woman of the Apocalypse is seen wearing a crown of twelve stars on her head. (Christian mythology)

Crown of thorns, which was placed on the head of Jesus during his crucifixion. (Christian mythology)

Radiate crown (also Solar crown, Sun crown, Eastern crown or Tyrant's crown), a crown or other headgear symbolizing the sun or more generally powers associated with the sun.

Corona Borealis (Northern Crown), the crown was considered to represent a crown given by Dionysus to Ariadne, after she was taken from the Athenian prince Theseus. When she wore the crown at her marriage to Dionysus, he placed it in the heavens to commemorate their wedding. (Greek mythology)

Corona Australis (Southern Crown), the crown has been associated with the myth of Bacchus and Stimula. Jupiter had impregnated Stimula, causing Juno to become jealous. Juno convinced Stimula to ask Jupiter to appear in his full splendor, which the mortal woman could not handle, causing her to burn. After Bacchus, Stimula's unborn child, became an adult and the god of wine, he honored his deceased mother by placing a wreath in the sky. (Roman mythology)

Belts

Thor wearing the magic belt Megingjörð

Megingjörð (Power-belt), a magic belt worn by the god Thor. (Norse mythology)

Peter Stumpp's magical belt, Peter claimed that the Devil had given him a magical belt or girdle, which enabled him to metamorphose into a werewolf. Removing the belt made him transform back to his human form. (German legend)

Girdles

Aphrodite's Cestus, a magic girdle that enhanced the wearer's beauty and made others fall in love with the wearer. (Greek mythology)

Girdle of Hippolyta, a girdle that was a symbol of Hippolyta's power over the Amazons, and given to her by Ares. Heracles' 9th Labor was to retrieve it. (Greek mythology)

Tyet, the ancient Egyptian symbol of the goddess Isis. It seems to be called "the Knot of Isis" because it resembles a knot used to secure the garments that the Egyptian gods wore. (Egyptian mythology)

Girdle of Brynhildr, Siegfried takes her girdle which makes Brynhildr lose her supernatural strength. (Norse mythology)

Bridle of Constantine, said to be made from the nails used during the crucifixion of Christ.

Gloves

Letter Gloves, or kirikindad were believed to have protective or magic powers. They are decorated with special patterns and are imbued with whispers and spells by the singing of the crafter making them. (Estonian mythology)

Veils

Veronica holding her veil, Hans Memling, c. 1470

Veil of Isis, an artistic motif in which nature is personified as the goddess Isis covered by a veil, representing the inaccessibility of nature's secrets. Helena Blavatsky, in Isis Unveiled in 1877, used the metaphor for the spiritual truths that her Theosophical belief system hoped to discover, and modern ceremonial magic includes a ritual called the "Rending of the Veil" to bring the magician to a higher state of spiritual awareness. (Western esotericism)

Veil of Veronica, according to legend, was used to wipe the sweat from Jesus' brow as he carried the cross. (Christian mythology)

Caps and hats

Cohuleen druith: or cochaillín draíochta is a special hat worn by merrows which enables them to travel between deep water and dry land. If they lose this cap, it is said that they will lose their power to return beneath the water. (Scottish folklore)

Winged petasos (also Winged petasus): the winged traveler hat of the messenger god Hermes. The Roman equivalent is Mercury. (Greek mythology)

Cap of invisibility (also Cap of Hades): a cap that turns a person invisible (Greek mythology)

Saci's cap: the red cap of the Saci which is the said source of all his magical abilities, like appearing and disappearing at will, inhuman speed (despite having just one leg) and the power to create and ride dust devils. Those who want to capture a Saci must throw a sieve over a Saci's dust devil to bind it and give a chance to remove his cap, rendering him powerless. Then he could be locked inside a bottle granting his total obedience - but not his loyalty, since the creature would always try to trick his master into giving back his cap. (Brazilian mythology)

Hat of fingernails, or kün̄test kübar is a hat belonging to Vanatühi that makes the wearer invisible. (Estonian mythology)

Garments

Jacob blesses Joseph and gives him the coat of many colors

Hagoromo (Feather cloak), a colored or feathered kimono of a tennin. Tennin are unable to fly without these kimono and thus will be unable to return to Heaven. (Japanese mythology)

Velificatio, a stylistic device used in ancient Roman art to frame a deity by means of a billowing garment. It represents "vigorous movement", an "epiphany", or "the vault of heaven", often appearing with celestial, weather, or sea deities. (Roman mythology)

Coat of many colors, the garment that Joseph owned, which was given to him by his father, Jacob. (Jewish mythology)

Penelope's burial shroud, which Odysseus's wife Penelope pretended to weave for her deceased father-in-law. She claimed that she would choose a suitor when the shroud was complete, but secretly unraveled it every night to delay the decision. (Greek mythology)

Devil's green coat, given to a soldier by the Devil, who claims its pockets are always full of limitless money, as told in the tale Bearskin. (German fairy tale)

Footwear

Boots

Hop-o'-My-Thumb stealing the Seven-league boots from the Ogre, by Gustave Doré
Ōusibùyúnǎ (藕絲步雲履; "[Lotus-root Thread] Cloud-stepping Boots" or "~Shoes"), made of lotus fiber, these are one of the treasures of the Dragon Kings; Ào Ming gives them to Sun Wukong in order to get rid of him when he acquires the Ruyi Jingu Bang. (Chinese mythology)

Fast-walker Boots (Сапоги-скороходы), allows the person wearing them to walk and

run at an amazing pace. (Russian folklore)

Seven-league boots, a pair of boots said to allow the wearer to make strides of seven leagues in length. (European folklore)

Sandals

Sandals of Jesus Christ, these were among the most important relics of the Catholic Church in the Middle Ages. (Christian mythology)

Talaria, Hermes's winged sandals which allowed him to fly. (Greek mythology)

Shoes

Helskór (Hel-shoes), were put on the dead so that they could go to Valhöll. (Norse mythology)

Shoes of Víðarr, which gave the god Vidar unparalleled foot protection. (Norse mythology)

Outerwear

Coats

Babr-e Bayan, the mythical coat worn by the Persian legendary hero Rostam in combat. (Persian mythology)

Pais Badarn Beisrydd, The Coat of Padarn Red-Coat: if a well-born man put it on, it would be the right size for him; if a churl, it would not go upon him. One of the Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain. (Welsh mythology)

Cloaks

Fjaðrhamr (Feather-skin), the goddess Freyja owns a cloak of falcon feathers. She assists other deities by allowing them to use her feathered cloak. (Norse mythology)

Swan Cloak, a magic robe made of swan feathers belonging to a swan maiden.

Tarnkappe, Sigurd's magical cloak that made the wearer invisible. (Norse mythology)

Mantles

Holy Robe in Trier

Mantle of Arthur (also Llen Arthyr yng Nghernyw), whoever was under it could not be seen, and he could see everyone. One of the Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain.

This item is known from two other sources, the prose tales Culhwch and Olwen (c. 1100) and The Dream of Rhonabwy (early 13th century). A very similar mantle also appears in the Second Branch of the Mabinogi, in which it is used by Caswallawn to assassinate the seven stewards left behind by Bran the Blessed and usurp the throne. (Welsh mythology)

Mantle of Elijah, the waters of which, touched by the Mantle (monastic vesture) mantle, divided, so as to permit both to pass over on dry ground across the Jordan River. (Abrahamic religion)

Mantle of Tegau Gold-Breast, Tegau Gold-Breast (Tegau Eurfron, wife of Caradoc) was a Welsh heroine. Her mantle would not serve for any woman who had violated her marriage or her virginity. It would reach to the ground when worn by a faithful woman but would only hang down to the lap of an unfaithful wife. (Welsh mythology)

Robes

Robe of the Fire-rat, a legendary robe of China that is made of the fireproof fur of the fire-rat. One of Kaguya-hime's suitor set out to search for the robe. (Japanese mythology)

Seamless Robe of Jesus (also Holy Robe, Holy Tunic, Honorable Robe or Chiton of the Lord), the robe said to have been worn by Jesus during or shortly before his crucifixion. (Christian mythology)

Sudarium of Oviedo and Veil of Veronica, purported "sweat cloths" that touched upon Jesus

Sun robe, the Woman of the Apocalypse is clothed with the sun. (Christian mythology)

Pants and shirts

Lichas bringing the garment of Nessus to Hercules

Nábrók (Death Underpants), a pair of pants made from the skin of a dead man, which are capable of producing an endless supply of money. (Icelandic folklore)

Shirt of Nessus, the poisoned shirt that killed Heracles. (Greek mythology)

Ragnar's enchanted shirt, when King Ælla threw Ragnar into the snake pit, it was claimed Ragnar was protected by an enchanted shirt that Aslaug had made. It was only when this shirt had been removed that the snakes could bite Ragnar and kill him. (Norse mythology)

Weapons

Yama with his famous Yama Pasha

Ankusha (also Elephant Goad), an elephant goad which is one of the eight auspicious objects known as Ashtamangala. Ankusha is also an attribute of many Hindu gods, including Ganesha. (Hindu mythology, Jainism, Buddhist mythology)

Ayudhapurusha, the anthropomorphic depiction of a divine weapon in Hindu art.

Ayudhapurushas are sometimes considered as partial incarnates of their divine owners. (Hindu mythology)

Bajiaoshan or Bashōsen (Banana Palm Fan), a giant fan made from banana leaves which has magical properties, as it can create giant whirlwinds. It was used by either Princess Iron Fan or Ginkaku. (Chinese mythology)

Halayudha, a plough used as a weapon by Balarama. (Hindu mythology)

Imhullu, a wind weapon used by the Assyrian god Marduk to destroy Tiamat, described in the ancient epic of creation Enûma Eliš. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Pasha, a supernatural weapon depicted in Hindu iconography. It is used to bind a foe's arms and legs or for hunting animals. (Hindu mythology)

Magic wand, found in the hands of powerful fairies. (Medieval legend)

Swords

See also: Magic sword

An angel (Camael) expelling Adam and Eve with a flaming sword

Ahimelech giving the sword of Goliath to David, by Aert de Gelder.

Cura Si Manjakini, a sword mentioned in the legends of the Malay Annals as originally possessed by Sang Sapurba, the legendary ancestor of Malay kings. (Malay folklore)

Flaming Sword, a sword glowing with flame by some supernatural power.

Kalevanmiekkä, Kaleva's sword. (Finnish mythology)

Mmaagha Kamalu, a sword that belongs to the Igbo god of war Kamalu. This sword

glows red when people with evil intentions are close by and it can cause tremors when struck on the ground. It gifts mere mortals victory in battle. (Igbo mythology)

Sword of Laban, after nearly being killed by a powerful and nefarious Laban, the young prophet Nephi later finds him drunk and unconscious. He's then commanded of God to use Laban's sword to kill him as he was wicked and would hurt future generations by withholding sacred records revealing God's Plan of Happiness. The sword was made of "precious steel" with a hilt of "pure gold".[2] After slaying Laban, Nephi put on Laban's armor to disguise himself to obtain the records, and escape the city. He would later use it as a model for manufacturing similar weapons for his people's defense. Laban's sword was passed down through the centuries to future prophets, kings, and warriors. (Book of Mormon)

Sword of Victory (also Phra Saeng Khan Chaiyasi), the sword's history has been shrouded in myth and legend. In 1784, Chao Phraya Apai Pubet of Cambodia received the blade from a fisher who found it in Tonle Sap when it was caught in his fishing net. He gave it to King Phutthayotfa Chulalok (Rama I) of Thailand, his suzerain at the time. According to legend, it was said that the moment the blade arrived in Bangkok, seven lightning strikes hit the city simultaneously, including the city gate, where the blade entered, and over the main gate of the Grand Palace. (Thai folklore)

Thuận Thiên (Heaven's Will), the mythical sword of the Vietnamese King Lê Lợi, who liberated Vietnam from Ming occupation after ten years of fighting from 1418 until 1428. (Vietnamese mythology)

War's great sword, the second of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rides on a Red Horse is War, a great sword was given to him. (Book of Revelation)

Goliath's sword, which was used by David to decapitate the fallen giant, and then given to him by the priest Achimelech when he ran away from King Shaul. (Jewish mythology)

Swords from Celtic mythology

Claíomh Solais on an Ireland stamp printed in 1922

Beagalltach (also Begallta) or "Little Fierce One", a short sword given to Diarmuid Ua Duibhne by his father Aengus. It broke in two pieces after hitting a boar with it. Paired with Móralltach.

Caladbolg (also Caladcholg), the sword of Fergus mac Róich and powerful enough to cut the tops off three hills; related to the Caledfwlch of Welsh mythology.

Caledfwlch, often compared to Excalibur. This sword is used by Llenlleawg Wyddel to kill Diwrnach Wyddel and his men.

Cear-d-nan Gallan, the Smith of the Branches, sword of Oisín.

Claíomh Solais (Sword of Light), the sword of Nuada Airgeadlámh. The sword glowed with the light of the sun and was irresistible in battle, having the power to cut his enemies in half.

Cosgarach Mhor, the Great Triumphant One, sword of Oscar.

Crocea Mors (fr), formerly the sword of Julius Caesar, captured by Nennius according to the legends presented by Geoffrey of Monmouth.

Cruadh-Chosgarach, the Hard Destroying One, sword of Caílte mac Rónáin.

Cruaidín Catutchenn, the sword of Cú Chulainn.

Dyrnwyn (White-Hilt), the Sword of Rhydderch Hael. When drawn by a worthy or well-

born man, the entire blade would blaze with fire. Rhydderch was never reluctant to hand the weapon to anyone, hence his nickname Hael "the Generous", but the recipients, as soon as they had learned of its peculiar properties, always rejected the sword.

Fragarach (also Sword of Air, Answerer or Retaliator), forged by the gods, wielded by Manannán mac Lir and Lugh Lamfada. No armor could stop it, and it would grant its wielder command over the powers of wind.

Mac an Luin, the Son of the Waves, sword of Fionn mac Cumhaill.

Mórralltach (also Morallta) or "Great Fierce One", a sword given to Diarmuid Ua Duibhne by his father Aengus, which left no stroke or blow unfinished at the first trial.

Orna, the sword of the Fomorian king Tethra, which recounts the deeds done with it when unsheathed. It was taken by Ogma and it then recounted everything it had done.

Singing Sword of Conaire Mór, a sword that would sing in battle.

Swords from Continental Germanic mythology

Dietrich von Bern and Hildebrand fight against dragons

Adylök or Hatheloke, the sword of Torrent of Portyngale, according to the Torrent of Portyngale it was forged by Wayland the Smith.

Gram, the sword wielded by Sigurd/Siegfried. It is called Balmung in the Nibelungenlied and Nothung in Richard Wagner's Der Ring des Nibelungen.

Blutgang (also Burtgang or Blodgang), the sword of Háma.

Eckesachs (Seax of Ecke), the sword that belonged to the giant Ecke before he was killed by Dietrich von Bern, who then took it for himself.

Mimung, a great sword that Wudga inherits from his father Wayland the Smith.

Nagelring, the sword of Dietrich von Bern.

Swords from Anglo-Saxon mythology and folklore of the British Islands

Brainbiter, the sword of Hereward the Wake.

Hrunting, the magical sword lent to Beowulf by Unferth which was annealed in venom.

Nægling, the other magical sword of Beowulf. Found in the cave of Grendel's mother.[3]

Sword of Saint Peter, St. Joseph of Arimathea brought the sword to Britain and it was kept at Glastonbury Abbey for many years until the Abbot gave it to Saint George.

(English folklore)

Wallace Sword, William Wallace used human skin for his sword's scabbard, hilt, and belt. The flesh's donor was said to have been Hugh de Cressingham, treasurer of Scotland, whom Wallace had flayed after defeating him in the battle of Stirling Bridge.

(Scottish folklore)

Swords from Arthuriana

The famous sword of Excalibur painted by Howard Pyle

Clarent, a sword of peace meant for knightings and ceremonies as opposed to battle, which was stolen and then used to kill Arthur by Mordred.

Coreiseuse (Wrathful), the sword of King Ban, Lancelot's father.

Excalibur, it is also sometimes referred to as: Caliburn, Caledfwlch, Calesvol,

Kaledvoulc'h, Caliburnus due to inconsistencies within the various Arthurian legends.

Sometimes attributed with magical powers or associated with the rightful sovereignty of Great Britain. Stated that it was forged on the Isle of Avalon.

Marmiadoise, it is also known as Mamyadoise. Marmiadoise is a sword said to originally belong to the Greek deity Hercules and was later given to his descendants, this sword would eventually be used by King Rions until he was killed by King Arthur during a battle, this sword would later be adopted by Arthur himself as he considered it to be superior when compared to the Excalibur.

Cortain (also Corte, Cortana, "Short"; Danish: Kortone), the shortened sword of Ogier the Dane, which was broken when test-cutting a marble block and had to be refashioned with the shorter blade.[4] And when Ogier was about to strike Prince Charlot dead in vengeance, but the archangel Michael stays the sword Short, and the prince is spared.

[5] Ogier's sword had originally been the broken-tipped sword of Tristan according to the 13th century Prose Tristan. There appears to be some conflation between this sword from literature and the actual British regalia sword Curtana aka Sword of Mercy.

Galatine, the name of the sword given to Sir Gawain by the Lady of the Lake.

Grail Sword, a cracked holy sword which Sir Percival bonded back together, though the crack remained.

Morddure, Arthur's sword crafted by Merlin in *The Faerie Queene*; "neither steele, nor stone" could fend its attack. (Renaissance fiction)

Secace, the sword that Lancelot used to battle the Saxons at Saxon Rock. It is translated as Seure (Sequence) in the Vulgate Cycle.

Sword in the Stone or Caliburn, a sword in the Arthurian legend which only the rightful king of Britain can pull from the stone; sometimes associated with Excalibur. In Mallory, the sword in the stone is not Excalibur and is not named. When the sword is broken in a fight with King Pellinore, the Lady of the Lake gives him Excalibur as a replacement. At Arthur's death, Excalibur is returned to the Lady of the lake by Sir Bedivere.

Sword with the Red Hilt, one of the swords wielded by Sir Balin. After his death, Merlin sealed it in the float stone where it remained until it was drawn by Sir Galahad. After Galahad, the sword passes to his father, Sir Lancelot who fatally wounds Sir Gawain with it.

Swords from English Romance
(non-Arthurian, noncyclical)

Chrysaor, the golden sword of Sir Artegall in *The Faerie Queene*. It was tempered with Adamant, and it could cleave through anything. (Renaissance fiction)

Egeking, a sword in the medieval poem *Greysteil*. Sir Graham obtains the sword 'Egeking' from Eger's aunt, Sir Egram's Lady.

Guy of Warwick's Sword, belonged to the legendary Guy of Warwick who is said to have lived in the 10th century.

Morgelai, the king makes Beves a knight and presents him with a sword called Morgelai.

Swords from Norse mythology

See also: List of historical swords § Norse

King Svafrlame Secures the Sword Tyrfinn

Sometimes it is difficult to decide if a legendary sword should be classed here as "mythological", or treated as historical (incl. pseudo-historical)[a]

Angrvaðill (Stream of Anguish), sword passed down from Víkingr to his son Þorsteinn in

Porsteins saga Víkingssonar, then to the grandson Friðþjóf in Friðþjófs saga hins frækna. It is inscribed with Runic letters which blaze in time of war but gleam with a dim light in time of peace.

Dáinsleif (Dáinn's legacy), king Högni's sword that gave wounds that never healed and could not be sheathed without killing a man.

Sword of Freyr, the sword of the Norse god Freyr, it is a magic sword which fought on its own.

Gramr (Gram), the sword that Óðinn struck into the world tree Barnstokkr which only Sigmundur the Völsung was able to pull out. It broke in battle with Odin but was later reforged by Sigmundur's son Sigurðr who used it to slay the dragon Fáfnir. After being reforged, it could cleave an anvil in half.

Höfuð, the sword of Heimdallr, the guardian of the Bifröst bridge.

Hrotti, part of Fáfnir's treasure, which Sigurðr took after he slew the dragon.

Jökulsnautr (Jokul's Gift), a sword belonging to Grettir which was later given to his brother Atli. (Sagas of Icelanders)

Kársnautr (Karr's-loom), Grettir defeats Kárr who was guarding the treasure in his own funeral tumulus from looters. The treasures are taken from the mound after Grettir's triumph, including an heirloom sword Kársnautr. (Sagas of Icelanders)

Lævateinn, a sword mentioned in an emendation to the Poetic Edda Fjölsvinnsmál by Sophus Bugge.

Mistilteinn, the magical sword of Þráinn, the draugr, later owned by Hrómundr Gripsson and it could never go blunt.

Riðill (also Refil), sword of the dwarf Regin.

Skofnung, the legendary sword of Danish king Hrólfr Kraki. It was renowned for supernatural sharpness and hardness, as well as for being imbued with the spirits of the king's twelve faithful berserker bodyguards. A cut made by Skofnung will not heal. The only way to stop this is by touching the cut with the Skofnung stone.

Sword of Surtr the flaming sword of the fire giant king Surtr which he uses to slay Freyr and cover the realms in fire at the end of Ragnarök, possibly the same as Freyr's sword.

Tyrfing (also Tirfing or Tyrving), the cursed sword of Svafhlami with a golden hilt that would never miss a stroke, would never rust and would cut through stone and iron as easily as through clothes. The dwarves made the sword, and it shone and gleamed like fire. However, they cursed it so that it would kill a man every time it was used and that it would be the cause of three great evils.

Swords from the Matter of France

Joan of Arc with her famous sword

Almace (also Almice or Almacia), sword of Turpin, Archbishop of Reims.

Balisarda, the sword of Rogero from Orlando Furioso made by a sorceress, and capable of cutting through enchanted substances.

Corrougue, the sword of Otuel.

Durendal (also Durandal or Durlindana in Italian), the sword of Roland, one of Charlemagne's paladins, (Orlando in medieval Italian verse) — alleged to be the same sword as the one wielded by Hector of Ilium. It was said to be the sharpest sword in all of existence.

Froberge, the sword of Renaud de Montauban.

Hauteclere (also Halteclere or Hauteclaire), the sword of Olivier. It is described as being of burnished steel, with a crystal embedded in a golden hilt.

Joan of Arc's sword, Joan's "voices" told her that a magical and holy sword would be found in the Church (fr) of Saint Catherine of Fierbois. It had five crosses upon it and that the rust was easily removed.

Joyeuse, sword of Charlemagne. Some legends claim Joyeuse was forged to contain the Lance of Longinus within its pommel; others say the blade was smithed from the same materials as Roland's Durendal and Ogier's Curtana.

Merveilleuse, the hero's sword in Doon de Mayence. It was so sharp that when placed edge downwards it would cut through a slab of wood without the use of force.

Murgleys (also Murgleis), sword of Ganelon, traitor and cousin of Roland. Its "gold pommel" held some kind of a "holy relic".

Précieuse, sword of Baligant, Emir of Babylon.

Sauvagine, second of the two magical swords of Ogier the Dane.

Swords from Spanish mythology

"Tizona", the sword attributed to El Cid, on exhibit in the Army Museum of Madrid

Colada, the other sword of El Cid.[6]

Lobera (Wolf Slayer), the sword of the king Saint Ferdinand III of Castile, inheritance of the epic hero Fernán González, according to Don Juan Manuel, Prince of Villena.[7]

Tizona (also Tizón), the sword of El Cid, it frightens unworthy opponents, as shown in the heroic poem Cantar de Mio Cid.[8]

Swords from Greek mythology

Harpe, an adamant sword used by the hero Perseus to decapitate Medusa.

Sword of Damocles, a huge sword hung above the throne where Damocles sat, it was held at the pommel only by a single hair of a horse's tail.

Sword of justice, in Themis right hand, she is seen to have a sword that faces downward. This sword represents punishment.

Sword of Peleus, a magic sword that makes its wielder victorious in the battle or the hunt.

Swords from Roman mythology

Sword of Attila (also Sword of Mars or Sword of God), the legendary sword that was wielded by Attila the Hun; claimed to have originally been the sword of "Mars", the war god of the Scythic barbarians.[9]

Swords from Hindu mythology

Vishnu holding his legendary sword Nandaka

Aruval, the Tamils revere the weapon, a type of billhook, as a symbol of Karupannar in (Tamil mythology)

Asi, a legendary sword mentioned in the epic Mahabharata.

Chandrasasa, the divine sword given to Ravana by Shiva

Khanda, (also Mahābhārata Sword), Khanda is represented as wisdom cutting through ignorance. In Hinduism, the Khanda is a symbol of Shiva. Khanda often appears in Rajput history but later on, it was used by Sikh warriors, scriptures, and art.

Nandaka (also Nandaki), the sword of the Hindu god Vishnu.

Nistrimsha, the sword of Pradyumna, a son of Krishna.

Pattayudha, the divine sword of the Veerabhadra, a commander of Shiva's troops.

Swords from Japanese mythology

Artist's impressions of the (unseen) Imperial Regalia of Japan

Ame-no-Ohabari (also Ama-no-Ohabari), used by Izanagi to kill his offspring, Kagu-tsuchi.

Futsu-no-mitama (August-Snap-Spirit), the sword of Takemikazuchi.

Juuchi Yosamu (10,000 Cold Nights), crafted by Muramasa – in a contest, Sengo Muramasa suspended the blade in a small creek with the cutting edge facing the current. Muramasa's sword cut everything that passed its way; fish, leaves floating down the river, the very air which blew on it.

Kogarasu Maru (Little Crow), a unique tachi sword believed to have been created by the legendary smith Amakuni during the 8th century CE.

Kogitsune-maru (Little Fox), Inari Ōkami and its fox spirits help the blacksmith Munechika forge the blade Kogitsune-maru at the end of the 10th century.

Kusanagi-no-tsurugi (also Ama-no-Murakumo-no-Tsurugi and Tsumugari no Tachi), sword of the Japanese god Susanoo, later given to his sister Amaterasu.

Totsuka-no-Tsurugi, the sword Susanoo used to slay Yamata no Orochi.

Yawarakai-Te (Tender Hands), crafted by Masamune – in a contest, Masamune Okazaki lowered his sword into the current and waited patiently. Only leaves were cut. However, the fish swam right up to it, and the air hissed as it gently blew by the blade. A monk who had been watching explained what he had seen; the Masamune was by far the finer of the two swords, as it did not needlessly cut that which is innocent and undeserving.

Swords from Chinese mythology

Feijian, a sword borrowed from Lü Dongbin to Xuanwu in order to subdue the spirits of the tortoise and the snake.

Gan Jiang and Mo Ye, the legendary Chinese twin swords named after their creators.

Glory of Ten Powers, a legendary Chinese sword allegedly forged in Tibet by husband-and-wife magicians of the ancient Bön tradition.

Huànyǐng, a branch that morphed into a sword in the hands of Zhuānxū, has the ability to command the elements and animals.

Xuan Yuan Sword, a sword given to Huangdi by Jiutian Xuannü during his war against Chiyao. Able to slay gods, demons and repel evil magic.

Téngkōng, a sword that descended from heaven into the possession of Zhuānxū. Said to levitate and points towards the direction of war.

Swords from Buddhist mythology

Chandhrasra, legendary sword of Manjusri, according to Swayambhu Purana used to found Kathmandu Valley, forms the centerpiece of flag of Kathmandu.

Houken, a metaphorical Buddhist sword used to cut away earthly desires, it is wielded by Acala.

Khanda represents wisdom cutting through ignorance. Hindu and Buddhist deities are often shown welding or holding khanda sword in religious art. Notably, Buddhist

guardian deities like Acala, Manjushri, Mahākāla and Palden Lhamo.

Swords from Slavic legend

Grus, the historical sword of Bolesław III Wrymouth, medieval prince of Poland.

Kladenets (also Samosek or Samosyok), the "self-swinging sword" is a fabulous magic sword in some Old Russian fairy tales. In English translations of Russian byliny and folklore, it may be rendered variously as "sword of steel". (Russian mythology)

Szczerbiec (Notched Sword or Jagged Sword), a legend links Szczerbiec with Bolesław I the Brave who was said to have chipped the sword by hitting it against the Golden Gate, Kiev (now in Ukraine) during his intervention in the Kievan succession crisis in 1018.

Swords from Middle Eastern mythology

Shamshir-e Zomorrodnegar (Persian: شمشیر زمردنگار), "The emerald-studded Sword" in the Persian mythical story Amir Arsalan. The hideous horned demon called Fulad-zereh was invulnerable to all weapons except the blows of Shamshir-e Zomorrodnegar. This blade originally belonged to King Solomon. (Persian mythology)

Tigh-e Tahmuras (Persian: تیغ تهمورث), "The Blade Of Tahmurath" is a heavenly blade made by the legendary Persian king Tahmurath in Iranian folk tales, which can neutralize magic and spells and destroy invulnerable creatures and demons. And it is usually used by Rostam and his family members. (Persian mythology)

Dhulfiqar, a sword sent from the Heavens to the Islamic prophet Muhammad by the archangel Gabriel, which he was ordered to give to Ali ibn Abi Talib. (Islamic mythology)

Pole weapons

Clubs and maces

Heracles' club, a gnarled olive-wood club wielded by Heracles. (Greek Mythology)

Sharur, the enchanted mace of the Sumerian god Ninurta. It can fly unaided and also may communicate with its wielder. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Tishtrya's mace, a mace wielded by Tishtrya that can create lightning and tornados. (Persian mythology)

Gorz-e gāvsār, an ox-headed mace described in various Iranian and Zoroastrian myths that is used as a symbol of victory and justice.[10] (Persian mythology)

Gorz-e Mithra, A golden mace wielded by Mithras, the god of covenants, that can be thrown from a distance, he twirls his mace over the heads of the demons every day and night in Hell to prevent them from harming the spirits of the dead too much. (Persian mythology)

Yagrush and Ayamur, two clubs created by Kothar and used by Baal to defeat Yam. (Phoenician mythology)

Indravarman III's metalwood bat, a legendary bat wielded by a Cambodian emperor.[11] (Buddhist mythology)

Lorg Mór, the magical club or staff of Dagda which was supposed to be able to kill nine men with one blow, but can return the slain to life with the handle. (Irish mythology)

Clubs and staffs from Hindu mythology

Yama advances to smite Ravana with the weapon of death

Kaumodaki, the mace of the Hindu god Vishnu, found in iconography of some of

Vishnu's avatars.

Kaladanda, the staff of Death[12] is a club used by Yama, the god of death in Hindu mythology. Once fired, it could kill anyone, no matter what boons they had to protect themselves.

Gada, the main weapon of the Hindu god Hanuman.

Mace of Bhima, a club that was presented by Mayasura. It was a weapon of the danava King Vrishaparva.

Rods and staffs

A 19th-century drawing of Sun Wukong featuring his staff

Merlin's staff, the staff of the legendary wizard of Camelot, advisor and mentor to king Arthur. (Arthurian legend)

Prospero's staff, staff belonging to the wizard Prospero in the Shakespearean play "The Tempest."

Gambanteinn, appears in two poems in the Poetic Edda. (Norse mythology)

Gríðarvölr, a magical staff given to Thor by Gríðr so he could kill the giant Geirröd.

(Norse mythology)

Nehushtan, a staff of bronze made by Moses to erect so that the Israelites who saw it would be protected from dying from the bites of the "fiery serpents". (Jewish mythology)

Ruyi Jingu Bang, the staff of Sun Wukong, which could alter its size from a tiny needle to a mighty pillar. (Chinese mythology)

Khaṭvāṅga, Shiva and Rudra carried the khatvāṅga as a staff weapon and are thus referred to as khatvāṅgīs. In Buddhist mythology, it is a particularly divine attribute of Padmasambhava and endemic to his iconographic representation and depicted as an accoutrement of his divine consorts, Mandarava and Yeshe Tsogyal. In the twilight language, it represents Yab-Yum. (Hindu mythology)

Aaron's rod, was endowed with miraculous power during the Plagues of Egypt that preceded the Exodus. Was carried by Aaron. (Jewish mythology)

Staff of Moses, used by Moses to produce water from a rock, was transformed into a snake and back, and was used at the parting of the Red Sea. (Jewish mythology)

Ruyi (As Desired or As [You] Wish), a curved decorative object that serves as a ceremonial sceptre in Chinese Buddhism or a talisman symbolizing power and good fortune in Chinese folklore. (Chinese folklore)

Was (Power or Dominion), a scepter associated with the gods as well as with the pharaoh. In later use, it was a symbol of control over the force of chaos that Set represented. It appears as a stylized animal head at the top of a long, straight staff with a forked end. (Egyptian mythology)

Opashoro, Oshalufan's staff. (Yoruba Mythology)

Rods and Staffs from Greek Mythology

Caduceus (also Kerykeion), the staff carried by Hermes or Mercury. It is a short staff entwined by two serpents, sometimes surmounted by wings, and symbolic of commerce. (Greek mythology)

Circe's staff, a staff with which the sorceress Circe could transform others into animals. (Greek mythology)

Rod of Asclepius, a serpent-entwined rod wielded by Asclepius, a deity associated with healing and medicine. (Greek mythology)

Thyrsus, a staff tipped with a pine cone and entwined with ivy leaves, carried by Dionysus and his followers. (Greek mythology)

Scythes

Greek God Kronos/Saturnus with sickle

Cronus' scythe, Cronus castrated his father Uranus using an adamant sickle given to him by his mother Gaia. (Greek mythology)

Grim Reaper's scythe, a large scythe wielded by the Grim Reaper.

Scythe of Father Time, during the Renaissance, Father Time was depicted as wielding the harvesting scythe, and became the representative of the cruel and unrelenting flow of time which, in the end, cuts down all things.

Death's scythe, the fourth of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rides on a Pale Horse is Death, he is commonly depict carrying a scythe. (Christian mythology)

Spears

Longinus with his famous Spear

Aram, the spear of Jangar. (Mongol mythology)

Ascalon, the spear (or sword) that St. George used to kill a dragon in Beirut and saving a princess from being sacrificed by the town. (Renaissance Fiction, Seven Champions of Christendom)

Gungnir, Odin's spear created by the Sons of Ivaldi. The spear is described as being so well balanced that it could strike any target, no matter the skill or strength of the wielder. (Norse mythology)

Gunnar's Atgeir, Gunnar's atgeir would make a ringing sound or "sing" when it was taken down in anticipation of bloodshed. (Norse mythology)

Maltet, the name of the spear of Baligant from The Song of Roland. (French folklore)

Rhongomyniad (also Rhongomiant), the spear of King Arthur that he used to defeat the legendary Sir Thomas of Walford. (Arthurian legend)

Spear of Achilles, created by Hephaestus and given to Peleus at his wedding with Thetis. (Greek mythology)

Spear of Longinus, see Lances: Bleeding Lance and Holy Lance (below).

Spears from Celtic mythology

Areadbhar (also Areadbhair), the spear of Lugh, which originally belonged to Písear, king of Persia. Lugh had no need to wield the spear himself. It was alive and thirsted for blood that was only stayed by steeping its head in a sleeping-draught of pounded fresh poppy seeds. When battle was near, it was drawn out; then it roared and struggled against its thongs, fire blazed from it, and it tore through the ranks of the enemy once slipped from the leash, never tired of slaying.

Crann Buidhe, the spear of Manannán.

Del Chliss, Cú Chulainn's spear that first belonged to Nechtan Scéne, and used to kill the sons of Nechtan Scéne. Formerly the name for the charioteer's goad, a split piece of wood.

Gáe Buidhe (Yellow Shaft), a yellow spear that can inflict wounds from which none could

recover. The spear of Diarmuid Ua Duibhne, given to him by Aengus.

Gáe Bulg, the spear of Cú Chulainn, made of the bone of a sea monster. According to the legend, this spear was crafted by the warrior maiden Scáthach and had the power to explode into dozens of barbs, producing instant death.

Gae Assail (Spear of Assal), another spear belonging to Lugh, the incantation "Ibar (Yew)" made the cast always hit its mark, and "Athibar (Re-Yew)" caused the spear to return.

Gáe Dearg (Red Javelin), the red spear of Diarmuid Ua Duibhne, given to him by Aengus. It inflicted wounds that none could recover from similar to Gáe Buide.

Lúin of Celtchar, the name of a long, fiery lance or spear belonging to Celtchar mac Uthechar and wielded by other heroes, such as Dubthach, Mac Cécht and Fedlimid.

Spears from Japanese mythology

Amenonuhoko (天沼矛 or 天之瓊矛 or 天瓊戈, "heavenly jeweled spear") is the name given to the spear in Shinto used to raise the primordial land-mass, Onogoro-shima, from the sea

Amenonuhoko (Heavenly Jewelled Spear), the naginata used by the Shinto deities Izanagi and Izanami to create the world – also called tonbogiri.

Ama-no-Saka-hoko (Heavenly Upside Down Spear) is an antique and mysterious spear, staked by Ninigi-no-Mikoto at the summit of Takachiho-no-mine, where he and his divine followers first landed, according to the legend of Tenson kōrin.

Nihongo, is one of three legendary Japanese spears created by the famed swordsmith Masazane Fujiwara. A famous spear that was once used in the Imperial Palace.

Nihongo later found its way into the possession of Masanori Fukushima, and then Tahei Mori.

Oteginé, is one of three legendary Japanese spears created by the famed swordsmith Masazane Fujiwara.

Tonbokiri, is one of three legendary Japanese spears created by the famed swordsmith Masazane Fujiwara, said to be wielded by the legendary daimyō Honda Tadakatsu. The spear derives its name from the myth that a dragonfly landed on its blade and was instantly cut in two. Thus Tonbo (Japanese for "dragonfly") and kiri (Japanese for "cutting"), translating this spear's name as "Dragonfly Slaying spear".

Polearms from Chinese mythology

Erlang Shen (二郎神), or Erlang is a Chinese God with his spear

Erlang Shen's spear, a three-pointed and double-edged spear with two cutting edges of a Saber used by Erlang Shen. It is powerful enough to penetrate and cleave through steel and stone like wool.

Green Dragon Crescent Blade, a legendary weapon wielded by Guan Yu in the historical novel Romance of the Three Kingdoms. It is a guandao, a type of traditional Chinese weapon. It is also sometimes referred to as the Frost Fair Blade, from the idea that during a battle in the snow, the blade continuously had blood on it; the blood froze and made a layer of frost on the blade.

Jiuchidingpa (Nine-tooth Iron Rake), the primary weapon of Zhu Bajie.

1.8 zhang long Serpent Spear, Zhang Fei's spear from the Three Kingdoms period in

China.

Spear of Fuchai, the spear used by Goujian's arch-rival King Fuchai of Wu.

Yueyachan (Crescent-Moon-Shovel), a Monk's spade that is the primary weapon of Sha Wujing. A double-headed staff with a crescent-moon blade at one end and a spade at the other, with six *xīzhàng* rings in the shovel part to denote its religious association.

Han Feizi's spear, a man was trying to sell a spear and a shield. When asked how good his spear was, he said that his spear could pierce any shield. Then, when asked how good his shield was, he said that it could defend from all spear attacks. Then one person asked him what would happen if he were to take his spear to strike his shield; the seller could not answer. This led to the idiom of "*zìxiāng máodùn*" (自相矛盾, "from each-other spear shield"), or "self-contradictory".

Bidents

Bident, a two-pronged implement resembling a pitchfork. In classical mythology, the bident is associated with Pluto/Hades, the ruler of the underworld. (Greek mythology)

Devil's pitchfork, a bident or two-pronged pitchfork belonging to the devil. (Christian mythology)

Javelins

Vel, a divine javelin associated with Hindu war god Kartikeya. (Hindu mythology)

Lances

Bleeding Lance, a sacred object, imbued with magic, in Grail ceremonies. Drops of blood issue from its point. When the Grail is Christianized, this weapon transforms into the Holy Lance, the spear that pierced the side of Jesus by the hand of a Roman soldier named Longinus. The blood is that of the lamb and drips eternally into the Grail. From the Vulgate Cycle on the Lance is also the weapon that inflicted the Grail-keeper's wound even though it is often attributed with healing powers. (Arthurian legend)

Bradamante's lance, a female Christian knight who wields a magical lance that unhorses anyone it touches. (Matter of France)

Lance of Olyndicus, wielded by the Celtiberians' war chief Olyndicus, who fought against Rome. According to Florus, he wielded a silver lance that was sent to him by the gods from the sky.[13] (Spanish mythology)

Holy Lance (also Spear of Longinus or Spear of Destiny), is the name given to the lance that pierced the side of Jesus as he hung on the cross, according to the Gospel of John. (Christian mythology)

Tridents

Shiva with his Trishula

Kongō, A trident-shaped staff which emits a bright light in the darkness, and grants wisdom and insight. The staff belonged originally to the Japanese mountain god Kōya-no-Myōjin. It is the equivalent of the Sanskrit Vajra, the indestructible lightning-diamond pounder of the king of the gods/rain-god Indra. There the staff represents the three flames of the sacrificial fire, part of the image of the vajra wheel. (Japanese mythology)

Trident of Poseidon, associated with Poseidon, the god of the sea in Greek mythology and the Roman god Neptune. When struck the earth in anger, it caused mighty earthquakes and his trident could stir up tidal waves, tsunamis, and sea storms. (Greek mythology)

Trident of Madhu, Madhu handed everything over to his son Lavanasura including his trident before drowning himself in the ocean because of shame. (Hindu mythology)

Trishula, the trident of Shiva, stylized by some as used as a missile weapon and often included a crossed stabilizer to facilitate flight when thrown. Considered to be the most powerful weapon. (Hindu mythology)

Whips

Chentu, a horse whip which looks like a crooked stick, and is a typical attribute of Aiyandar, Krishna in his aspect as Rajagopala, and Shiva with Nandi. (Hindu mythology)

Daggers

Carnwennan (Little White-Hilt), the dagger of King Arthur. It is sometimes attributed with the power to shroud its user in shadow, and was used by Arthur to slice the Very Black Witch in half. (Arthurian legend)

Dagger of Rostam, a glittering dagger that Rostam used to behead the white daeva Div-e Sepid. (Persian mythology)

Knife of Llawfrodedd the Horseman, Llawfrodedd Farchog (from marchog "the Horseman"), or Barfawc "the Bearded" in other manuscripts, is said to have owned a knife which would serve for a company of 24 men at the dinner table. (Welsh mythology)

Parazonium, a dagger frequently carried by Virtus, Mars, Roma, or the Emperor, giving them the aura of courage. (Roman mythology)

Daggers from Indonesia and Malay folklore

Kris Mpu Gandring, Ken Arok's cursed dagger. The unfinished or incomplete kris would kill seven men, including Ken Arok.

Kris Taming Sari (Flower Shield or Beautiful Shield), one of the most well-known kris in Malay literature, said to be so skilfully crafted that anyone wielding it was unbeatable.

Kris Setan Kober, belong to Arya Penangsang, the mighty viceroy (adipati) of Jipang who was killed by his own kris called Setan Kober ("devil of the grave"). Forged by Empu Bayu Aji in the kingdom of Pajajaran, and had 13 luk on its blade.

Axes

The Honest Woodcutter, also known as Mercury and the Woodman and his famous Golden Axe

Axe of Perun, the axe wielded by the Slavic god of thunder and lightning, Perun. (Slavic paganism)

Forseti's axe (also Fosite's axe), a golden battle axe that Forseti (or Fosite in the Frisian mythology) used to save the old sages of the wreck and then threw the axe to an island to bring forth a source of water. (Norse mythology)

Hephaestus's Labrys, a double-headed axe used by Hephaestus to slice open Zeus's head and free Athena, whose pregnant mother Zeus swallowed to prevent her offspring from dethroning him. (Greek mythology)

Lightning axe, an axe that is wielded by the Maya rain deity Chaac and used to produce thunder and rain. (Maya mythology)

Parashu, the battle-axe of Shiva who gave it to Parashurama. (Hindu mythology)

Pangu's axe, an axe wielded by Pangu. He used it to separate yin from yang, creating the Earth (murky yin) and the Sky (clear yang). (Chinese mythology)

Paul Bunyan's axe, an axe wielded by Paul Bunyan. It was responsible for carving the

Grand Canyon after Paul once dragged it behind him while walking. (American folklore)
Gobán Saor's axe, it could hold back the tide when it was thrown onto the seashore. (Irish mythology)

Shango's axe, an axe wielded by Shango that can produce thunder. (Yoruba mythology)

Zeus's Labrys, at Labraunda there were depictions of Zeus who was called Zeus Labrandeus (Ζεὺς Λαβρανδεύς) with a tall lotus-tipped sceptre upright in his left hand and the double-headed axe over his right shoulder. (Greek mythology)

Golden axe, a woodcutter accidentally dropped his axe into a river and sat down to weep. Hermes dived into the water and returned with a golden axe. Hermes asked if this is his axe, but the woodcutter said it was not. (Greek folklore)

Silver axe, the woodcutter returned the same answer when a silver axe was brought to the surface by Hermes. Only when his own axe is found does he claim it. Impressed by his honesty, Hermes allows him to keep all three axes. (Greek folklore)

Hammers

Mjölnir, a magical hammer wielded by Thor. It was invulnerable and when thrown would return to the user's hand. (Norse mythology)

Ukonvasara (also Ukonkirves), the weapon of the Finnish thunder god Ukko. (Finnish mythology)

Uchide no kozuchi, a legendary Japanese "magic hammer" which can "tap out" anything wished for, and is wielded by Daikoku-ten in popular belief. (Japanese folklore)

Hammer of Hephaestus, the hammer of the Greek god Hephaestus, which he used to make the Greek gods' weapons. (Greek mythology)

Bow and arrows

Bows

Houyi, the God of Archery

Arash's bow, Arash used the bow to determine the border between Persia and Turan, it is said that the arrow was traveling for three days, and Arash sacrificed himself while firing the bow by putting his life force in the arrow. (Persian mythology)

Fail-not, the bow of Tristan. It was said to never miss its mark. (Arthurian legend)

Houyi's bow, the God of Archery used his bow to shoot down nine out of ten sun-birds from the sky. (Chinese mythology)

Conquest's bow, the first of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rides on a White Horse is Conquest, and he who sat on it had a bow. (Christian mythology)

Ofas, bows and arrows used by the divine odés (hunters). (Yoruba mythology)

Kērēsāspa's bow, The bow with which Kērēsāspa went to war with the giant demonic bird Kamak and shot infinite arrows like rain into its wings and brought it down and killed it. People also know that bow as a rainbow in the sky. (Persian mythology)

Bows from Classical Greek and Roman mythology

Apollo's bow, a silver bow wielded by Apollo, used to slay Python.

Artemis's bow, a silver bow wielded by Artemis.

Eros's bow, a bow wielded by Eros that could cause one to love or hate the person they first saw after being struck.

Heracles's bow, which also belonged to Philoctetes, its arrows had been dipped in the blood of the Lernaean Hydra, which made them instantly lethal.

Eurytus' bow, Eurytus became so proud of his archery skills that he challenged Apollo. The god killed Eurytus for his presumption, and Eurytus' bow was passed to Iphitus, who later gave the bow to his friend Odysseus. It was this bow that Odysseus used to kill the suitors who had wanted to take his wife, Penelope.

Bows from Hindu mythology

Pinaka, a bow wielded by Shiva that fired arrows that could not be intercepted.

Vijaya, a bow wielded by Parashurama.

Gandiva, a bow created by Brahma and used by Arjuna during the Kurukshetra War.

Sharanga, the bow of the Hindu god Vishnu and his avatars.

Kaundinya's bow, a magic bow wielded by the Brahman Kaundinya, who used it to make the Naga princess Mera fall in love with him.[14]

Indra's bow, the rainbow is depicted as an archer's bow. Indra, the god of thunder and war, uses the rainbow to shoot arrows of lightning.

Arrows

Killing of Ravana Painting by Brahmstra of Arrow of Brahma

Apollo's arrow, An arrow that could cause health or cause famine and death in sleep. (Greek mythology)

Artemis's arrow, golden arrows that could be used to bring sudden death and disease to girls and women. (Greek mythology)

Arrow of Brahma, the demi-god Rama faced the demon king of Sri-Lanka, Ravana.

Rama fired the arrow of Brahma that had been imparted to him by Agastya. The arrow of Brahma burst Ravana's navel, and returned to Rama's quiver. (Hindu mythology)

Teen Baan, Shiva gave Barbarika three infallible arrows (Teen Baan). A single arrow was enough to destroy all opponents in any war, and it would then return to Barbarika's quiver. (Hindu mythology)

Elf-arrow (also Pixie Arrow), were arrowheads of flint used in hunting and war by the aborigines of the British Isles and of Europe in general. Elf-Arrows derived their name from the folklore belief that the arrows fell from the sky, and were used by elves to kill cattle and inflict Elfshot on human beings. Elf-Arrows were sometimes worn as amulets, occasionally set in silver, as a charm against witchcraft. (English folklore)

Heracles' arrows, arrows wielded by Heracles that were coated in poisonous Hydra blood. (Greek mythology)

Gusisnautar, magic arrows given to Örvar-Oddr by his father. (Norse mythology)

Sagitta (Arrow), regarded as the weapon that Hercules used to kill the eagle Aquila that perpetually gnawed Prometheus' liver. (Greek mythology)

Crossbows

Saintly Crossbow of the Supernaturally Luminous Golden Claw (also 靈光金爪神弩; SV: Linh Quang Kim Trảo Thần Nỏ), which could kill 300 men with one shot. A giant golden turtle (also Kim Quy) gave An Dương Vương one of his claws and instructed him to make a crossbow using it as a trigger, assuring him he would be invincible with it.[‡ 1]

[15] A man called Cao Lỗ (or Cao Thông) was tasked with the creation of the crossbow. [‡ 1][16]:88[17](see also Vietnamese mythology)

William Tell's crossbow: the governor of Altdorf forced William to shoot with his crossbow at an apple placed over his son's head a hundred feet away, as a way of

punishing him for not bowing to the governor's statue. William, despite being a master of the crossbow, loaded two arrows into it. At the first attempt he hit the target. Amazed, the governor asked the reason for loading the second arrow. William replied that, in case the first projectile hit his son, he would shoot the second arrow into the evil heart of the one who caused his death. (Swiss folklore)

Projectile weapons

Sling-stone (also Cloich Tabair), was used by Lugh to slay his grandfather, Balor the Strong-Smiter in the Cath Maige Tuired according to the brief accounts in the Lebor Gabála Éirenn. (Irish mythology)

Thunderbolt, lightning plays a role in many mythologies, often as the weapon of a sky god and weather god. Thunderbolts as divine weapons can be found in many mythologies. In Greek mythology, the thunderbolt is a weapon given to Zeus by the Cyclops, or by Hephaestus in Greek mythology. Zibelthiurdos of Paleo-Balkan mythology is a god recognized as similar to Zeus as a wielder of lightning and thunderbolts. In Igbo mythology, the thunderbolt is the weapon of Amadioha and in Yoruba mythology, the thunderbolt is the weapon of Shango.

Xiuhcoatl, a lightning-like weapon wielded by Huitzilopochtli. (Aztec religion)

Holly Dart or Mistletoe, a weapon that Loki used to kill Baldr, variously depicted as a holly dart, mistletoe, arrow, or spear. (Norse mythology)

Tathlum, the missile fired by Lugh from the Sling-stone. (Irish mythology)

Magic Bullet, an enchanted bullet obtained through a contract with the devil in the German folk legend Freischütz. A marksman has obtained a certain number of bullets destined to hit without fail whatever object he wishes. Six of the magic bullets are thus subservient to the marksman's will, but the seventh is at the absolute disposal of the devil himself. (German folklore)

Silver bullet, a bullet cast from silver that is often the only weapon effective against a werewolf, witch, or other monsters.

Kenkonken, a chakram of great power wielded by Nezha. (Chinese mythology)

Projectile weapons from Hindu mythology

Astra, a supernatural weapon, presided over by a specific deity. To summon or use an astra required knowledge of a specific incantation/invocation, when armed.

Brahmastra, described in a number of the Puranas, it was considered the deadliest weapon. It was said that when the Brahmastra was discharged, there was neither a counterattack nor a defense that could stop it.

Narayanastra, the personal missile of Vishnu in his Narayana or Naraina form.

Pashupatastra, an irresistible and most destructive personal weapon of Shiva and Kali, discharged by the mind, the eyes, words, or a bow.

Varunastra, a water weapon (a storm) according to the Indian scriptures, incepted by Varuna. In stories it is said to assume any weapon's shape, just like water. This weapon is commonly mentioned as being used to counter the Agneyastra.

Agneyastra, the god of fire Agni possess a weapon that would discharge and emit flames inextinguishable through normal means.

Sudarshana Chakra, a legendary spinning disc like weapon used by the Hindu God Vishnu.

Vajra, the weapon of the Vedic rain and thunder-deity Indra, and is used symbolically by

the dharmic traditions to represent firmness of spirit and spiritual power. (Hindu mythology/Buddhist mythology/Jain mythology)

Brahmanda Astra, it is said in the epic Mahabharata that the weapon manifests with the all five heads of Lord Brahma as its tip. Brahma earlier lost his fifth head when he fought with Lord Shiva. This weapon is said to possess the power to destroy entire solar system or Brahmand, the 14 realms according to Hindu cosmology.

Brahmashirsha Astra, It is thought that the Brahmashirsha Astra is the evolution of the Brahmastra, and 4 times stronger than Brahmastra. The weapon manifests with the four heads of Lord Brahma as its tip. When it strikes an area it will cause complete destruction and nothing will grow, not even a blade of grass, for the next 12 years. It will not rain for 12 years in that area, and everything including metal and earth become poisoned.

Vasavi Shakti, the magical dart of Indra. Used by Karna against Ghatotkacha in the Mahabharata war.

Hooks

Māui's Fishhook, used to catch the fish that would become New Zealand's North Island; the hook was also used to create the Hawaiian Islands. (Polynesian mythology) but could also be used as a weapon to defeat those that try to misuse the hook.

Jewelry

Necklaces

Brísingamen, the necklace of the goddess Freyja. (Norse mythology)

Necklace of Harmonia, allowed any woman wearing it to remain eternally young and beautiful, but also brought great misfortune to all of its wearers or owners. It was made by Hephaestus and given to Harmonia, the daughter of Aphrodite and Ares, as a curse on the House of Thebes for Aphrodite's infidelity. (Greek mythology)

Necklace of the Lady of the Lake, a jeweled necklace given to Sir Pelleas after assisting an old woman across a river. It was enchanted so that its wearer would be unfathomably loved. (Arthurian legend)

Yasakani no Magatama, a bejeweled necklace of magatamas offered to Amaterasu. One of three Sacred Imperial Relics of Japan. It represents benevolence. (Japanese mythology)

Mikuratana-no-kami, a necklace of beads. Izanagi gave Amaterasu as a representation of her rule over Takama-ga-hara. (Japanese mythology)

Amulets and Charms

Fig trees often represent talismans with the udumbara

Agimat, a Filipino word for "amulet" or "charm".

Ankh, an amulet which appears frequently in Egyptian tomb paintings and other art, often at the fingertips of a god or goddess. (Egyptian mythology)

Phylactery, an amulet or charm, worn for its supposed magical power.

Rabbit's foot, the foot of a rabbit is carried as an amulet believed to bring good luck. (American folklore/Canadian folklore)

Vedic amulet, in Vedic literature, fig trees often represent talismans with the udumbara fig tree having been deemed the "lord of amulets". (Hindu mythology/Buddhist mythology)

Wolfssegen (also Wolfsegen and Wolf-Segen), an apotropaic charm against wolves.
(European folklore)

Rings

Goetia seal of Solomon

Andvaranaut, a magical ring capable of producing gold, first owned by Andvari. (Norse mythology)

Draupnir, a golden arm ring possessed by Odin that is a source of endless wealth.
(Norse mythology)

Ring of Dispel, a ring given to Sir Lancelot by the Lady of the Lake which could dispel any enchantment. In *Le Chevalier de la Charrette* it is given to him by a fairy instead. He used the ring to cross the Sword Bridge. (Arthurian legend)

Ring of Mudarra, the ring that Gonzalo Gustioz breaks in two pieces so he can later recognize the son with which his lover is pregnant. When that son, Mudarra, joins the two halves, it again becomes a complete ring and Gonzalo Gustioz is healed of his blindness in the epic poem *Cantar de los Siete Infantes de Lara*.^[18] (Spanish mythology)

Ring of Gyges, a mythical magical artifact that granted its owner the power of invisibility.
(Greek mythology)

Seal of Solomon, a magical brass or steel ring that could imprison demons. (Jewish mythology/Christian mythology)

Svíagriss, Adils' prized ring in the *Hrólfr Kraki's* saga. (Norse mythology)

Stone and Ring of Eluned the Fortunate, a cloak of invisibility owned by Merlin. (Welsh mythology)

Angelica's ring, a ring possessed by Angelica, princess of Cathay in the legends of Charlemagne. It rendered its wearer immune to all enchantments, and renders the user invisible when placed in their mouth. (Mythology in France)

Nibelungen ring, Alberich steals the Rhinegold from the Rhinemaidens, having learned that he who is willing to renounce love will thereby gain the ability to forge a ring of power from the gold. Alberich forges the ring and makes himself lord over all the Nibelungen. (German mythology)

Aladdin's ring, a magic ring the sorcerer from the Maghreb has lent him. When he rubs his hands in despair, he inadvertently rubs the ring and a genie appears. (Arabic mythology)

Wish ring, three princesses gave Halvor a ring to wish himself to his parents and back to Soria Moria Castle. (Scandinavian folklore)

Arm rings

The third gift — an enormous hammer (1902) by Elmer Boyd Smith and the ring Draupnir is visible among other creations by the Sons of Ivaldi

Keyur, a golden jewellery, worn by Krishna on his arm over the biceps. (Hindu mythology)

Earrings

Karna Kundala, the ear-rings of Karna (was present at his birth). (Hindu mythology)

Makarakundala, makara shaped ear-rings are sometimes worn by the Hindu gods, for

example Shiva, the Destroyer, or the Preserver-god Vishnu, the Sun god Surya, and the Mother Goddess Chandi. (Hindu mythology)
Shiva Kundala, the Hindu God Shiva wears two earrings or Kundalas. Traditional images of Shiva depict the two earrings named – Alakshya and Niranjana. (Hindu mythology)
Gemstones

As is usual in bestiaries, the lynx in this late 13th-century English manuscript is shown urinating, the urine turning to the mythical stone Lyngurium

Lyngurium (also Ligurium), the name of a mythical gemstone believed to be formed of the solidified urine of the lynx. (Medieval legend)

Batrachite, gemstones that were supposedly found in frogs, to which ancient physicians and naturalists attributed the virtue of resisting poison. (Medieval legend)

Draconite, a mythical gemstone taken from the head of a dragon and believed to have magical properties.

Tide jewels, the kanju (干珠?, lit. "(tide-)ebbing jewel") and manju (満珠?, lit. "(tide-)flowing jewel") were magical gems that the Sea God used to control the tides. (Japanese mythology)

Mermaid tears, Neptune forbade the mermaids to use their abilities to change the course of nature. In a horrible storm, one mermaid weathered the crossings for a ship. She had, over time, grown to fall in love with the ship's captain from afar. When she calmed the wind and waves to save the man's life, Neptune angrily exiled her to the depths of the ocean, and ordered her to never to swim to the surface again. Still, today, her brightly gleaming tears wash up on the shore as sea glass as a reminder of true love. (Medieval legend)

Five-colored Jewel from a Dragon's Neck, a jewel that shines five colors found in a dragon's neck. One of Kaguya-hime's suitor set out to search for the jewel. (Japanese mythology)

Hope Diamond, the diamond has been surrounded by a mythology of a reputed curse to the effect that it brings misfortune and tragedy to persons who own it or wear it, but there are strong indications that such stories were fabricated to enhance the stone's mystery and appeal, since increased publicity usually raised the gem's value and newsworthiness. Unsubstantiated legends claim that the original form of the Hope Diamond was stolen from an eye of a sculpted statue of the goddess Sita, the wife of Rama, the seventh Avatar of Vishnu.

Flaming pearl (also Wish-granting pearl), oriental dragons are shown with a flaming pearl under their chin or in their claws. The pearl is associated with spiritual energy, wisdom, prosperity, power, immortality, thunder, or the moon. (Chinese mythology)

Gem of Kukulcan, the Mayan god brought fire, earth, air, and water to the world.

Kukulcan, though, only has the wind gem, and with it can control the air. (Maya mythology) [citation needed]

Gemstones from Hindu/Buddhist mythology

14th century Goryeo painting of Ksitigarbha holding a cintamani

Cintamani (also Chintamani Stone), a wish-fulfilling jewel within both Hindu and Buddhist traditions, equivalent to the philosopher's stone in Western alchemy. (Hindu

mythology/Buddhist mythology)

Kaustubha is a divine jewel or "Mani", which is in the possession of Vishnu. (Hindu mythology)

Navaratna are the sacred nine "royal gems". (Hindu mythology)

Syamantaka (also Syamantakamani and Shyamantaka Jewel), the most famous jewel that is supposed to be blessed with magical powers. (Hindu mythology)

Stones

The Stone of Destiny (Lia Fáil) at the Hill of Tara, once used as a coronation stone for the High Kings of Ireland

Baetyl, a sacred stone endowed with life. (Greek mythology)

Bezoar, a stone believed to provide an antidote against any poison.

Philosopher's stone, said to perform alchemy without an equal sacrifice being made, such as turning lead to gold, and creating something out of nothing. (Medieval legend)

Sesshō-seki (also Killing Stone), a stone that kills anyone who comes into contact with it. (Japanese mythology)

Stone of Giramphiel, a stone described in Diu Crône. Sir Gawain wins from the knight Fimbeus and it offers him protection against the fiery breath of dragons and the magic of the sorcerer Laamorz. (Arthurian legend)

Singasteinn (Old Norse singing stone or chanting stone), an object that appears in the account of Loki and Heimdallr's fight in the form of seals. (Norse mythology)

Llech Ronw (also Slate of Gron), a holed stone located along Afon Bryn Saeth in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Wales. The stone is described as being roughly forty inches by thirty inches with a hole of about an inch in diameter going through it. (Welsh mythology)

Adder stone, believed to have magical powers such as protection against eye diseases or evil charms, preventing nightmares, curing whooping cough, the ability to see through fairy or witch disguises and traps if looked at through the middle of the stone, and recovery from snakebite. (Welsh mythology)

Toadstone (also Bufonite), a mythical stone thought to be produced by a toad that provides an antidote to poison. (Medieval legend)

Stone of Scone (also Stone of Destiny), an oblong block of red sandstone. (Matter of Britain)

Sledovik, a sacred stone venerated in Slavic and Finnic pagan practices. (Slavic paganism)

Lia Fáil (also Stone of Destiny), a stone at the Inauguration Mound on the Hill of Tara in County Meath, Ireland. In legend, all of the kings of Ireland were crowned on the stone up to Muirchertach mac Ercae c. AD 500. (Irish mythology)

Thunderstone, throughout Europe, Asia, and Polynesia – flint arrowheads and axes turned up by farmer's plows are considered to have fallen from the sky. They were often thought to be thunderbolts and are called "thunderstones".

Gjöll, the rock to which Fenrir the wolf is bound. (Norse mythology)

Vaidurya, a precious stone worn by the goddesses Lakshmi and Rigveda. (Hindu Mythology)

Seer stone, some early-nineteenth-century Americans used seer stones in attempts to gain revelations from God or to find buried treasure. From about 1819, Joseph Smith

regularly practiced scrying, a form of divination in which a "seer" looked into a seer stone to receive supernatural knowledge. (Mormon mythology)

Urim and Thummim, a set of seer stones bound in a breastplate, or by silver bows into a set of spectacles. (Mormon mythology)

Lapis manalis (Stone of the Manes), was either of two sacred stones used in the Roman religion. One covered a gate to Pluto, abode of the dead; Festus called it ostium Orci, "the gate of Orcus". The other was used to make rain; this one may have no direct relationship with the Manes, but is instead derived from the verb manare, "to flow". The two stones had the same name. However, the grammarian Festus held the cover to the gate of the underworld and the rainmaking stone to be two distinct stones. (Roman mythology)

Charmstone (charm-stone and charm stone), a stone or mineral artifact associated with various traditional cultures, including those of Scotland and the native cultures of California and the American southwest.

Snakestones (also Serpentstones), fossilised ammonites were thought to be petrified coiled snakes, and were called snakestones. They were considered to be evidence for the actions of saints, such as Hilda of Whitby, a myth referenced in Sir Walter Scott's Marmion, and Saint Patrick, and were held to have healing or oracular powers. (Medieval legend)

Benben, the mound that arose from the primordial waters Nu, and on which the creator god Atum settled. (Egyptian mythology)

Omphalos, Zeus sent two eagles across the world to meet at its center, the "navel" of the world. Omphalos stones marking the center were erected in several places about the Mediterranean Sea; the most famous of those was at Delphi. Omphalos is also the name of the stone given to Cronus. (Greek mythology)

Uluru (also Ayers Rock), the first tells of serpent beings who waged many wars around Uluru, scarring the rock. The second tells of two tribes of ancestral spirits who were invited to a feast, but were distracted by the beautiful Sleepy Lizard Women and did not show up. In response, the angry hosts sang evil into a mud sculpture that came to life as the dingo. There followed a great battle, which ended in the deaths of the leaders of both tribes. The earth itself rose up in grief at the bloodshed, becoming Uluru.

(Australian Aboriginal mythology)

Skofnung stone, a stone that can heal wounds made by the sword Skofnung. (Norse mythology)

Colored Stones of Nüwa, five colored stones crafted by the goddess Nüwa that each represent one of the five Chinese elements, fire, water, earth, metal, and wood.

(Chinese Mythology)

Madstone, a special medicinal substance that, when pressed into an animal bite, was believed to prevent rabies by drawing the "poison" out. (American folklore)

Alatyr, a sacred stone, the "father to all stones", the navel of the earth, containing sacred letters and endowed with healing properties. (Slavic folklore)

Edun Ara, stones struck by lightning, used by Shango. (Yoruba mythology)

Vehicles

La Carreta Nagua (The Wagon), a haunted cart that is driven by Death and pulled by two skeletal oxen. It could supposedly be heard at night because of the sound of chains

it made being dragged along the streets. (Nicaraguan culture)
Airborne

Riding a Flying Carpet, an 1880 painting by Viktor Vasnetsov

Atet (also Sun Barge of Ra), the legendary boat that the Egyptian Solar deity Ra used to cross the sky during the day, and which bore his body through the Twelve Kingdoms of Egypt. (Egyptian mythology)

Flying mortar and pestle of Baba Yaga, she flies around in a mortar and using the pestle as a rudder. (Slavic Mythology)

Magic carpet (also Flying carpet), a legendary carpet that can be used to transport humans who are on it instantaneously or quickly to their destination. (Arabian mythology)

Flying Throne of Kai Kavus, an eagle-propelled craft built by the Persian king Kay Kāvus. It was used for flying the king all the way to China. (Persian mythology)

Jamshid's flying throne, a golden throne that Jamshid built and ordered the demons to lift it from Babylon to Azerbaijan. According to the Shahnameh, people named that day Nowruz to commemorate this event. (Persian mythology)

Roth Rámach (lit. Rowing Wheel), the magical flying machine of Mug Ruith, a mythological Irish Druid who along with his feathered headdress (the encennach), hovers across the skies [2]. (Irish Mythology)

Chasse-galerie (also Bewitched Canoe or Flying Canoe), Baptiste had a canoe with paddles, he made a pact with the devil so his canoe would fly wherever Baptiste wished. However, those within the canoe could not say the name of God, fly over a church, touch any crosses, or the canoe would crash. Baptiste uttered the magic words: "Acabris! Acabras! Acabram" to make the canoe fly. (Canadian folklore)

Santa's sleigh, Santa Claus on a reindeer sleigh pulled by flying reindeer and help him deliver presents to children. (Modern folklore)

Witch's broom, European witches are usually depicted flying on broomsticks, known as a besom. (Medieval legend)

Lagâri Hasan Çelebi's rocket, Lagari Hasan Çelebi made a successful crewed rocket flight, launched in a 7-winged rocket using 50 okka (140 lbs) of gunpowder from Sarayburnu, the point below Topkapı Palace in Istanbul. (Ottoman legend)

Nezha's wind and fire wheels, the Immortal Taiyi gave Nezha a wind-wheel and a fire-wheel. These were stood on whilst chanting incantations, to serve as a magic vehicle in the mythological story Fengshen Yanyi. (Chinese mythology)

Vimana from Hindu mythology

The Celestial Chariot, Pushpaka Vimana from Ramayana

Pushpa Vimana (An Aeroplane with flowers), a mythical Aeroplane found in Ayyavazhi mythology. In Maharashtra, it is the Pushpak Viman (a heavenly aircraft shaped as an eagle) which took Saint Tukaram (a devotee of Vishnu) to heaven.

Pushpaka Vimana or Dandu Monara – Pushpaka was originally made by Vishvakarma for Brahma, the Hindu god of creation; later Brahma gave it to Kubera, the god of wealth; but it was later stolen, along with Lanka, by his half-brother, the king Ravana. Chariots

Chariot of Morgan Mwynfawr, a chariot belonging to Morgan Mwynfawr which would quickly reach whatever destination one might wish to go to. (Welsh mythology)

Flidais's chariot, a chariot drawn by deer. (Irish mythology)

Hebo's chariot, a chariot pulled by two dragons. (Chinese mythology)

Ukko's chariot, cause thunderstorms when Ukko drove his chariot through the skies. (Finnish mythology)

Chariots from Abrahamic Mythology

Merkabah (chariot), Ezekiel's vision of the four-wheeled chariot driven by four hayyot, each of which has four wings and the four faces of a man, lion, ox, and eagle.

Chariot of fire, the chariot that carried the prophet Elijah to heaven.

Chariots from Classical Greek and Roman mythology

Aphrodite's chariot, Hephaestus presented Aphrodite with a golden chariot as bridal gift.

Apollo's chariot, was pulled by his sacred swans. He also gave his lover Hyacinthus a swan-drawn chariot.

Ares's chariots, Ares received his chariots from the forge of Hephaestus, they were pulled by immortal horses.

Artemis's chariot, it was made of gold and was pulled by the four golden-horned deer she caught. The bridles of her chariot were also made of gold.

Cabeiri's chariot, drawn by metallic, fire-breathing horses.

Dionysus's chariot, drawn by panthers.

Eos's chariot, drawn by two horses.

Hades's chariot, golden chariot drawn by four black horses.

Helios's chariot, a golden chariot drawn by four fiery horses driven across the sky by the Greek sun god, Helios. Also, according to Apollodorus, Helios owned a chariot, drawn by winged dragons, which he gave to his granddaughter Medea.[19]

Hera's chariot, a chariot drawn by peacocks.

Nemesis's chariot, a chariot drawn by griffins.

Poseidon's chariot, pulled by hippocampi.

Rhea's chariot, drawn by lions.

Selene's chariot, drawn across the night sky by her bulls or horses.

Sol Invictus's chariot, depicted riding a quadriga on the reverse of a Roman coin.

Zeus's chariot, drawn by the four directional winds (Anemoi) in horse-shape.

Chariots from Hindu & Ayyavazhi mythology

Surya on His Celestial Chariot

Rahu's chariot, drawn by eight black horses. (Hindu mythology)

Surya's chariot, drawn by seven horses. (Hindu mythology)

Vitthakalai, a gold-decorated chariot of Kali. (Ayyavazhi mythology)

Chariots from Norse mythology

Thor's chariot, driven across the sky by Thor and pulled by his two goats Tanngrisnir and Tanngrjóstr.

Freyja's chariot, a chariot pulled by cats.

Álfröðull (Elf-beam, Elf-disc or Elf-glory, Elf-heaven), referring both to the sun-chariot of the sun goddess Sól and to the rider Sól. Álfröðull is pulled by two horses, Árvakr and Alsviðr across the sky each day.

Ships

The Flying Dutchman

Caleuche, a mythical ghost ship of the Chilote mythology and local folklore of the Chiloé Island, in Chile. (Chilote mythology)

Canoe of Gluskab, able to expand so it could hold an army, or shrink to fit in the palm of your hand. (Abenaki mythology)

Canoe of Māui, it became the South Island of New Zealand. (Māori mythology)

Guingelot, Thomas Speght, an editor of Chaucer's works at the end of the 16th century, made a passing remark "Concerning Wade and his bote called Guingelot", and also his strange exploits in the same.

The Preserver of Life, the ship built in the Epic of Gilgamesh by Utnapishtim and the craftspeople of his village at the request of Enki Ea to hold his wife and relatives, as well as the village craftspeople, the animals to be saved, and various grains and seeds. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Wave Sweeper, a magic boat belonging to Lugh. (Irish mythology)

Flying Dutchman, a legendary ghost ship that can never make port and is doomed to sail the oceans forever. (Nautical folklore)

Mannigfual, the ship of the giants. (North-Frisian mythology)

Prydwen (also Pridwen), the ship of King Arthur, according to the Welsh poem, The Spoils of Annwn. This ship also appeared in Culhwch and Olwen, when Arthur traveled to Ireland, to fetch the cauldron of Diwrnach and the boar Twrch Trwyth. In later Arthurian legend, Pridwen was the name of Arthur's shield. (Arthurian legend)

Noah's Ark, the vessel by which God spares Noah, his family, and a remnant of all the world's animals from the flood. (Christian mythology)

Chinese treasure ship (also Baochuan), a large wooden ship in the fleet of admiral Zheng He, who led seven voyages during the early 15th-century Ming dynasty. (Chinese mythology)

Takarabune (Treasure Ship), a mythical ship piloted through the heavens by the Seven Lucky Gods during the first three days of the New Year. (Japanese folklore)

Mendam Berahi, a legendary flagship of Malacca Sultanate. (Malay folklore)

Ghost Ship of Northumberland Strait, a ghost ship said to sail ablaze within the Northumberland Strait. (Canadian folklore)

Mahogany Ship, a putative early Australian shipwreck that is believed by some to lie beneath the sand in the Armstrong Bay area, approximately 3 to 6 kilometres west of Warrnambool in southwest Victoria, Australia. (Australian folklore)

Lohengrin's boat, a swan-drawn boat. (Medieval legend)

White Ship, also called the valge laev, is mythical ship that brings freedom or takes people away to a better land. (Estonian mythology)

Ships from Egyptian mythology

Atet, the solar barge of the sun god Ra. It was also known as the Mandjet (Egyptian for "The Boat of Millions of Years") and, during the night, as the Mesektet.

Matet, (Growing Stronger), the first of two boats traveled in by Ra, the sun god as he traveled the sky daily with the sun on his head. During the period between dawn and noon, Ra occupies the Matet boat.

Seqtet, (Growing Weaker), the second six hours of the day (from noon till dusk) in Ancient Egyptian belief. It was preceded by the Matet boat. The Seqtet boat is represented by the Sun as Ra, and Ra as a boat since it sails across the sky like a boat on water.

Neshmet, a vessel belonging to the god Nun. Osiris was transported in it on the river Nile during the Osiris festival at Abydos.

Hennu (also Hennu boat and Henu), the boat of the god Seker. Depending on the era or the prevailing dynasty of Egypt, the Hennu sailed toward either dawn or dusk.

Ships from Greek mythology

The Argo (c. 1500 – 1530), painting by Lorenzo Costa

Argo, the ship on which Jason and the Argonauts sailed. She contained in her prow a magical piece of timber from the sacred forest of Dodona, which could speak and render prophecies.

Phaeacian ships, in the Odyssey, are described as being as fast as a falcon, steered by thought and requiring no helmsman, and able to travel even through mist or fog without any danger of being shipwrecked.

Boat of Charon, which carries souls of the newly deceased across the rivers Styx and Acheron that divided the world of the living from the world of the dead.

Ship of Theseus, the ship Theseus rode on his trip to kill Minotaur. He set off with a black sail, promising to his father, Aegeus, that if successful he would return with a white sail. Theseus forgot to put up the white sails instead of the black ones, however, so Aegeus, believing his son was dead, committed suicide by throwing himself into the sea, leading this body of water to be named Aegean Sea. This ship is more famous as the thought experiment Ship of Theseus.

Ships from Norse mythology

Thor kicks Litr onto Baldr's Hringhorni, illustration by Emil Doepler (ca. 1905)

Ellida, a magic dragon ship given to Víking as a gift by Aegir.

Hringhorni, the ship of the god Baldr, described as the "greatest of all ships".

Naglfar, a ship made out of fingernails and toenails of the dead. It will set sail during Ragnarök.

Sessrúmnir, is both the goddess Freyja's hall located in Fólkvangr, a field where Freyja receives half of those who die in battle, and also the name of a ship.

Skíðblaðnir, a boat owned by Freyr.

Ullr's bone, Ullr could traverse the sea on his magic bone.

Trains

The Silver Train of Stockholm (Silverpilen, "the Silver Arrow"), a silver colored ghost train said to roam the Stockholm Metro as part of several urban legends. (Swedish folklore)

St. Louis Ghost Train, visible at night along an old abandoned rail line in between Prince Albert and St. Louis, Saskatchewan. (Canadian legend)

Phantom funeral train, a funeral train decorated in black bunting said to run regularly from Washington, D.C. to Springfield, Illinois, around the anniversary of Abraham Lincoln's death, stopping watches and clocks in surrounding areas as it passes.

(American folklore)

Unidentified flying objects

Black triangle, UFOs reported as having a triangular shape and dark color, typically observed at night, described as large, silent, hovering, moving slowly, and displaying pulsating, colored lights. (Ufology)

Flying saucer (also Flying disc), a supposed type of flying craft having a disc or saucer-shaped body, commonly used generically to refer to an anomalous flying object. (Ufology)

Foo fighter, a type of UFO reported and named by the U.S. 415th Special Operations Squadron, the term was also commonly used to mean any UFO sighting from that period. (Ufology)

Treasures

Jug from Lydian Treasure Usak

Four Treasures of the Tuatha Dé Danann (also Hallows of Ireland), consisting of the Claíomh Solais, Lug's Spear, Cauldron of the Dagda, and the Lia Fáil. (Celtic mythology)

Jamshid's Enchanted treasures, Hidden treasures in Iranian folklore that Jamshid has hidden all over the world, which are protected by all kinds of spells, demons and magical monsters. (Persian mythology)

Three Sacred Treasures of Japan, consisting of the Kusanagi, the jewel necklace Yasakani no Magatama, and the mirror Yata no Kagami. (Japanese mythology)

Karun Treasure, said to belong to King Croesus of Lydia. (Persian mythology)

Thirteen Treasures of the Island of Britain, consisting of the Dyrnwyn, the Hamper of Gwyddno Garanhir, the Horn of Brân Galed, the Chariot of Morgan Mwynfawr, the Halter of Clydno Eiddyn, the Knife of Llawfrodedd the Horseman, the Cauldron of Dyrnwch the Giant, the Whetstone of Tudwal Tudglyd, the Coat of Padarn Beisrudd, the Crock and Dish of Rhygenydd Ysgolhaig, the Chessboard of Gwenddoleu ap Ceidio, the Mantle of Arthur in Cornwall, the Mantle of Tegau Gold-Breast, and the Stone and Ring of Eluned the Fortunate. (Matter of Britain)

Rheingold (also Rhinegold), a hoard of gold in the Nibelungenlied where three Rheinmaidens swim and protect the treasure. (Norse mythology)

Yamashita's gold, also referred to as the Yamashita treasure, is the name given to the alleged war loot stolen in Southeast Asia by Imperial Japanese forces during World War II and hidden in caves, tunnels, underground complexes, or just underground in the Philippines—most commonly the island of Mindanao. According to the legend, it is named after the Japanese general Tomoyuki Yamashita, nicknamed "The Tiger of Malaya". (Japanese urban legends)

Eight Treasures, consisting of the wish-granting pearl (flaming pearl), the double lozenges, the stone chime, the pair of rhinoceros horns, the double coins, the gold or silver ingot, coral, and the wish-granting scepter. (Chinese mythology)

Nidhi (also Nidhana, Nikhara, or Sevadhi) is a treasure, which consists of nine precious objects (navanidhi) belonging to Kubera, god of wealth. (Hindu mythology)

Štěchovice treasure, a purported hoard of Nazi treasure. It is said to be hidden in the town of Štěchovice in the Central Bohemian Region of the Czech Republic. (Czech legend)

Nazi gold train (also Wałbrzych gold train), a Nazi Germany-era train buried in a tunnel

in Lower Silesia between Breslau (Wrocław) and Waldenburg (Wałbrzych) in May 1945 during the last days of World War II. (Polish legend)

Confederate gold, a hidden cache of gold lost after the American Civil War. Millions of dollars' worth of gold was lost or unaccounted for after the war and has been the speculation of many historians and treasure hunters. Allegedly, some of the Confederate treasury was hidden in order to wait for the rising again of the South and at other times simply so that the Union would not gain possession. (American legend)

Lasseter's Reef – A fabulously rich gold deposit said to have been discovered – and then subsequently lost – by bushman Harold Bell Lasseter in a remote and desolate corner of central Australia towards the end of the 19th century. (Australian folklore)

Relics

Relics from Buddhist mythology

Cetiya, "reminders" or "memorials" (Sanskrit caitya) are objects and places used by Theravada Buddhists to remember Gautama Buddha.

Relic of the tooth of the Buddha, venerated in Sri Lanka as a cetiya "relic" of Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism.

Śarīra, a generic term referring to Buddhist relics. In Buddhism, relics of the Buddha and various sages are venerated. After the Buddha's death, his remains were divided into eight portions. Afterward, these relics were enshrined in stupas wherever Buddhism was spread.

Relics from Christian mythology

The Shrine of the Three Kings in Cologne Cathedral

Relics of Jesus, a number of relics associated with Jesus that have been claimed and displayed throughout the history of Christianity.

Shrine of the Three Kings (German Dreikönigsschrein), a reliquary said to contain the bones of the Biblical Magi, also known as the Three Kings or the Three Wise Men.

Relics from Islamic mythology

Sacred Relics (also Holy Relics and Sacred Trust), consist of religious pieces sent to the Ottoman Sultans between the 16th century to the late 19th century.

Sacred Cloak of the Prophet, a cloak believed to have been worn by the Islamic prophet Muhammad.

Books

Rectangular tablets passed down by the Hand of God in the 10th century Byzantine Leo Bible

Book of Thoth, a legendary book containing powerful spells and knowledge supposed to have been written by the god Thoth, said to have been buried with the Prince Neferkaptah in Coptos. (Egyptian mythology)

Jade Books in Heaven, described in several Daoist cosmographies as existent primordially in the various divine Heavens. These Jade Books are variously said to be instrumental in creating and maintaining the divine structure of the universe, or as regulating national or personal destiny. (Chinese mythology)

Sibylline Books, described to have helped Rome in many situations. (Roman mythology)

Rauðskinna (Book of Power), a legendary book about black magic, alleged to have

been buried with its author, the Bishop Gottskálk grímmi Nikulásson of Hólar.
(Scandinavian folklore)

Tablet of Destinies (also Tupsimati), a set of clay tablets which hold the power of creation and destruction. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Tablets of Stone (also Tablets of Stone, Stone Tablets, or Tablets of Testimony), in the Hebrew Bible, were the two pieces of stone inscribed with the Ten Commandments when Moses ascended Mount Sinai as written in the Book of Exodus. (Jewish mythology)

Book of Life, the book in which God records the names of every person who is destined for Heaven or the World to Come. (Christian/Jewish)

Levisterio, a book contains magical forms and an instrument they used to take various exams used by the Mapuches to protect by the dark forces. (Chilote/Mapuche)

Cauldrons

Eldhrímnir, the cauldron in which Andhrímnir cooks Sæhrímnir. (Norse mythology)

Pair Dadeni (Cauldron of Rebirth), a magical cauldron able to revive the dead. (Welsh mythology)

Cauldron of the Dagda, a cauldron where no company ever went away from it unsatisfied, it is said to be bottomless. (Celtic mythology)

Cauldron of Hymir, a mile-wide cauldron which the Æsir wanted to brew beer in. (Norse mythology)

Cauldron of Dyrnwech the Giant, said to discriminate between cowards and brave men: whereas it would not boil meat for a coward, it would boil quickly if that meat belonged to a brave man. (Welsh mythology)

The Cauldron of Cerridwen, which features in the origin story of Taliesin, who accidentally obtains the awen from it while stirring it for Cerridwen. (Welsh mythology)

Botany

Anāre-Javdanegi, In some religious traditions, it is said that Zoroaster made Esfandiyār invulnerable by eating a few pomegranate seeds from heaven. (Persian mythology)

Blue Lotus, a symbol of the sun, since the flowers are closed at night and open again in the morning. The origin of the world was taught to have been when the sun god Ra emerged from a lotus flower growing in "primordial waters". At night, he was believed to retreat into the flower again. (Egyptian mythology)

Magic bean, Jack trades the family cow for a handful of magic beans which caused a gigantic beanstalk to grow outside Jack's window during the night. (British fairy tale)

Mandrake, In the past, mandrake was often made into amulets which were believed to bring good fortune, cure sterility, etc. In one superstition, people who pull up this root will be condemned to hell, and the mandrake root would scream and cry as it was pulled from the ground, killing anyone who heard it.

White Lotus, the Egyptians believed that the lotus flower gave them strength and power. Horus was occasionally shown in art as a naked boy with a finger in his mouth sitting on a lotus with his mother. (Egyptian mythology)

Vegetable Lamb of Tartary, is a believed to grow sheep as its fruit. (Central Asian legend)

Plants and herbs

Hanuman fetches the herb-bearing mountain, in a print from the Ravi Varma Press, 1910's

Aglaophotis, a herb used for warding off demons, witchcraft, and fever.

Fern flower, a magic flower that blooms on the eve of the Summer solstice. It will bring fortune to the person who finds it. (Baltic and Slavic mythology)

Gaokerena, was a mythic Haoma plant that had healing properties and gave immortality to the resurrected bodies of the dead when eaten. (Persian mythology)

Hungry grass (also Féar Gortach), a patch of cursed grass which causes perpetual and insatiable hunger. (Irish mythology)

Moly, a magical herb Hermes gave to Odysseus to protect him from Circe's magic. (Greek mythology)

Raskovnik, a magical herb which can unlock or uncover anything that is locked or closed. (Slavic mythology)

Ausadhirdipyamana, healing plants used for healing and rejuvenations in battles.

These are used by Ashvins. (Hindu mythology)

Haoma, the Avestan language name of a plant and its divinity, both of which play a role in Zoroastrian doctrine and in later Persian culture and mythology. (Persian mythology)

Silphium, a plant that was used in classical antiquity as a seasoning and as a medicine. Legend said that this plant was a gift from the god Apollo. (Roman mythology)

Verbena, a plant which has long been associated with divine and other supernatural forces. It was called "tears of Isis" in ancient Egypt, and later called "Hera's tears". In ancient Greece it was dedicated to Eos Erigoneia. In the early Christian era, folk legend stated that V. officinalis was used to staunch Jesus' wounds after his removal from the cross. It was consequently called "holy herb" or (e.g. in Wales) "Devil's bane".

Yao Grass, a type of mythical plant. (Chinese mythology)

Shamrock, a plant honored as sacred by ancient Druids. The Druids believed the shamrock had the power to avert evil spirits. Some people still believe the shamrock has mystical, even prophetic powers. It is said that the leaves of shamrocks turn upright whenever a storm is coming. (Irish mythology)

Sanjivani, a magical herb which can cure any malady. It was believed that medicines prepared from this herb could revive a dead person. (Hindu mythology)

Trees

"The Fall of Man" by Lucas Cranach the Elder and the Tree of Knowledge is on the right Talking tree, a form of trees in sapient mythologies and stories. (Worldwide)

Jeweled Branch of Hōrai, a branch from a tree found on Hōrai which has jewels for leaves. One of Kaguya-hime's suitors set out to search for the branch. (Japanese mythology)

Cypress of Kashmar, a mythical cypress tree of legendary beauty. Iranians considered Kashmir cypress as a relic of Zoroaster, and they believed that Vishtaspa ordered the planting of this cypress after accepting the Zoroastrianism. (Persian mythology)

Ficus Ruminalis, a wild fig tree that had religious and mythological significance in ancient Rome. The tree is associated with the legend of Romulus and Remus. (Roman mythology)

Donar's Oak (also Thor's Oak and Jove's Oak), a sacred tree of the Germanic pagans

located in what is now the region of Hesse, Germany. (Germanic mythology)
Silver Branch, a tree that represents entry into the Celtic Otherworld. It is also associated with Manannán mac Lir, an Irish sea deity with strong affiliation to Tír na nÓg. As guardian of the Otherworld, Manannán also has strong ties with Emhain Abhlach, the Isle of Apple Trees, where the magical silver apple branch is found. (Irish mythology)

Lotus tree, bearing a fruit that caused drowsiness, and which was said to be the only food of an island people called the Lotophagi or Lotus-eaters. When they ate of the lotus tree they would forget their friends and homes and would lose the desire to return to their native land in favor of living in idleness. (Greek mythology/Roman mythology)

Money tree, a holy tree which can bring money and fortune to the people, and is a symbol of affluence, nobility and auspiciousness. (Chinese mythology)

Tree of life, a tree planted in the middle of the Garden of Eden and guarded by cherubim. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology)

Tree of the knowledge of good and evil, one of two trees in the story of the Garden of Eden, along with the tree of life. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology)

Golden Bough, before entering Hades, Deiphobe tells Aeneas he must obtain the bough of gold which grows nearby in the woods around her cave, and must be given as a gift to Proserpina, the queen of Pluto, king of the underworld. (Roman mythology)

Zaqqum (Zakum), a vile tree that grows in the depths of Jahannam (Hell). (Islamic mythology)

Nariphon, a tree which bears fruit in the shape of young female creatures. (Buddhist mythology)

Trees from Norse mythology

Image showing the sacred tree to the right of the temple, from Olaus Magnus' *Historia de Gentibus Septentrionalibus* (1555). To the right of the tree is a depiction of a man being sacrificed in the spring

Barnstokkr (Child-trunk), a tree that stands in the center of King Völsung's hall.

Glásir (Gleaming), a tree or grove described as "the most beautiful among gods and men", bearing golden leaves located in the realm of Asgard, outside the doors of Valhalla.

Læraðr, a tree that is often identified with Yggdrasil. It stands at the top of the Valhöll.

Two animals, the goat Heiðrún and the hart Eikþyrnir, graze its foliage.

Mímameiðr (Mimi's Tree), a tree whose branches stretch over every land, is unharmed by fire or metal, bears fruit that assists pregnant women, and upon whose highest bough roosts the rooster Víðópnir.

Sacred tree at Uppsala, a sacred tree located at the Temple at Uppsala, Sweden, in the second half of the 11th century. It is not known what species it was, but a scholar has suggested that it was a yew tree.

World trees

The Ash Yggdrasil by Friedrich Wilhelm Heine

Yggdrasil, an immense tree that connects the nine worlds. (Norse mythology)

Sefirot, (counting, enumeration) the kabbalistic tree of life which encompasses both the

physical and higher metaphysical realm. It consists of the ten attributes/emanations in Kabbalah. (Jewish mythology)

Irminsul (Great/Mighty Pillar or Arising Pillar), a pillar which is attested as playing an important role in the Germanic paganism of the Saxon people. The oldest chronicle describing an Irminsul refers to it as a tree trunk erected in the open air. (Germanic mythology)

Égig érő fa (Sky-high Tree), also called Életfa (Tree of Life), Világfa (World Tree), or Tetejetlen Fa (Tree Without a Top), is an element of Hungarian shamanism and native faith, and a typical element of Hungarian folk art and folk tales, and also a distinct folk tale type. (Hungarian mythology)

Akshayavat or Akshay Vat (Indestructible Banyan Tree), is a sacred fig tree. The sage Markandeya asked Lord Narayana to show him a specimen of the divine power. Narayana flooded the entire world for a moment, during which only the Akshayavat could be seen above the water level. (Hindu mythology)

Kalpavriksha (also Kalpataru, Kalpadruma or Kalpapādapa), a wish-fulfilling divine tree. (Hindu mythology)

Ashvattha (also Assattha), a sacred tree for the Hindus and has been extensively mentioned in texts pertaining to Hinduism, mentioned as 'peepul' (*Ficus religiosa*) in Rig Veda mantra I.164.20 . Buddhist texts term the tree as Bodhi tree, a tree under which Gautam Buddha meditated and gained enlightenment. (Hindu mythology)

Ağaç Ana, the world tree is a central symbol. According to the Altai Turks, human beings are descended from trees. According to the Yakuts, White Mother sits at the base of Ağaç Ana, whose branches reach to the heavens where it is occupied by various creatures that have come to life there. The blue sky around the tree reflects the peaceful nature of the country and the red ring that surrounds all of the elements symbolizes the ancient faith of rebirth, growth and development of the Turkic peoples. (Turkic mythology)

Modun, the world tree. (Mongolian mythology)

Mesoamerican world tree, the world trees embodied the four cardinal directions, which also serve to represent the fourfold nature of a central world tree, a symbolic axis mundi which connects the planes of the Underworld and the sky with that of the terrestrial realm. (Mesoamerican mythology)

Austras koks (Tree of Dawn), on the path of the sun, in or by the water, often on an island or rock in middle of the seas, is the Austras koks thought to represent world tree or axis mundi, it is usually described as a tree, but can also be variety of other plants or even objects. (Latvian mythology)

Világfa (World Tree)/Életfa (Tree of Life), the world tree connects different realities; the underworld, this world, and the upper world together. A shaman was believed to be able to climb through each of these levels freely by a ladder. (Finnic mythologies)

Foods

Drinks

Lord Vishnu took the form of Beauty Mohini and distributed the Amrita (Ambrosia, Elixir) to Devas. When Rahu (snake dragon) tried to steal the Amrita, his head was cut off Ambrosia, the food or drink of the gods, which gives longevity or immortality to whoever

consumes it. (Greek mythology)

Amrita, the drink of the gods which grants them immortality. (Hindu mythology)

Mead of poetry (also Mead of Suttungr), a mythical beverage that whoever "drinks becomes a skald or scholar to recite any information and solve any question. (Norse mythology)

Soma, it is described as being prepared by extracting juice from the stalks of a certain plant. In both Vedic and Zoroastrian tradition, the name of the drink and the plant are the same, and also personified as a divinity, the three forming a religious or mythological unity. (Zoroastrian mythology)

Fruits

Apple of Discord (also Golden Apple of Discord), the goddess Eris inscribed "to the fairest" and tossed in the midst of the festivities at the wedding of Peleus and Thetis. (Greek mythology)

Forbidden fruit, eaten by Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, which they had been commanded not to do by God. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology)

Golden apple, an element that appears in various national and ethnic folk legends or fairy tales.

Peaches of Immortality, consumed by the immortals due to their mystic virtue of conferring longevity on all who eat them. (Chinese mythology)

Pomegranate (also Fruit of the Dead in Greek mythology), believed to have sprung from the blood of Adonis. It was the rule of the Moirai that anyone who consumed food or drink in the underworld had to spend eternity there. Persephone ate six pomegranate seeds while in the Underworld after becoming Hades' wife, so she had to spend six months in the underworld every year. (Greek mythology)

Silver apple, magical silver apples can be found on Emhain Abhlach, the Isle of Apple Trees. (Irish mythology)

Poison apple, featured frequently in folktales or fairy tales.

Eggs

Snake and world egg of the inhabitants of Tyre

Golden egg, the main object of the folk tale "Kurochka Ryaba". (Russian folklore)

Myrrh egg, the phoenix would build itself a nest of cinnamon twigs that it then ignited; both nest and bird burned fiercely and would be reduced to ashes, from which a new, young phoenix arose. The new phoenix embalmed the ashes of the old phoenix in an egg made of myrrh and deposited it in the Egyptian city of Heliopolis ("the city of the sun" in Greek). (Greek mythology)

World egg (also Cosmic Egg or Mundane Egg), found in the creation myths of many cultures and civilizations. The world egg is a beginning of some sort, and the universe or some primordial being comes into existence by "hatching" from the egg, sometimes lain on the primordial waters of the Earth.

Substances

Aura, a field of luminous radiation surrounding a person or object

Manna (also Mana), an edible substance that God provided for the Israelites during their travels in the desert. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology/Islamic mythology)

Ectoplasm, a supposed physical substance that manifests as a result of energy.

Aureola, the radiance of luminous cloud which, in paintings of sacred personages, surrounds the whole figure.

Aura, a field of luminous radiation surrounding a person or object.

Tears of Ra (also Tears of Re), which are produced when the sun god Ra cries, and become honey bees upon touching the ground. (Egyptian mythology)

Breath of life, in countless stories from different cultures featured gods breathing life into object that brought them to life.

Cosmic energy, the translation into English by Sir John Woodroffe of the term Shakti in Hindu religion, based on the Hindu philosophy known as Kashmir Shaivism; a term for spiritual energy; also referred to as prana; thought in Hindu philosophy to be the source of kundalini; identified by some New Age authors with the quantum vacuum zero point energy and as orgone energy it is believed in New Age thought to be a vital force that animates all forms of life.

Silap Inua (also Silla), similar to mana or ether, the primary component of everything that exists; it is also the breath of life and the method of locomotion for any movement or change. Silla was believed to control everything that goes on in one's life. (Inuit mythology)

Hellfire, the fires from the lake of fire located in Hell. (Christian mythology)

Odic force (also Od, Odyle, Önd, Odes, Odylic, Odylic, Odems), the name given in the mid-19th century to a hypothetical vital energy or life force by Baron Carl von Reichenbach.

Nebu, the ancient Egyptians believed that gold was an indestructible and heavenly metal. The sun god, Ra, was often referred to as a mountain of gold. (Egyptian mythology)

Xirang (also Hsi-jang, Swelling Earth, Self-renewing soil, Breathing earth, and Living earth), a magical substance in Chinese mythology that had a self-expanding ability to continuously grow – which made it particularly effective for use by Gun and Yu the Great in fighting the Great Flood. (Chinese mythology)

Alien metal, the rancher William Brazel found mysterious paper-like metals across his sheep pasture. Believe to have been the remains of an extraterrestrial flying saucer crash near Roswell, New Mexico. The event would later be known as the Roswell UFO incident. (Ufology)

Solomon's shamir, a substance that had the power to cut through or disintegrate stone, iron and diamond. King Solomon is said to have used it in the building of the First Temple in Jerusalem in the place of cutting tools. (Jewish mythology)

Substances from Greek mythology

Orichalcum, a metal that was considered second only to gold in value, and was mined in Atlantis in ancient times.

Panacea, a remedy that would cure all diseases and prolong life indefinitely.

Water of Lethe, which flows through the river Lethe, and causes those who drink it to experience forgetfulness.

Aether, the pure essence that the gods breathed, filling the space where they lived, analogous to the air breathed by mortals.

Miasma, "a contagious power... that has an independent life of its own. Until purged by

the sacrificial death of the wrongdoer, society would be chronically infected by catastrophe".

Kykeon, ancient Greek drink of various descriptions used at the climax of the Eleusinian Mysteries.

Pneuma, a supernatural substance that is present in all souls and sustains life in all breathing living creatures. Thought of as giving cosmic energy through breath. One main components of the parts of the soul in ancient Greek medicine.

Substances from Norse mythology

Atter, a liquid substance that is the origin of all living things, and is produced by Jörmungandr and other serpents.

Surtlogi (Surtr's fire), the fire with which the giant Surtr will burn the world with fire, thus destroying it.

Yggdrasil dew, dew that falls from the ash tree Yggdrasil. When Líf and Lífþrasir seek refuge within Yggdrasil, they find that they can survive there by drinking the dew of Yggdrasil.

Substances from Medieval legend and European folklore

Azoth, a universal medicine or universal solvent sought in alchemy. (Medieval legend)

Adamant (also Adamantine), a hard substance, whether composed of diamond, some other gemstone, or some type of metal.

Alkahest, a hypothetical universal solvent which can dissolve every other substance, including gold. It was much sought after by alchemists for what they thought would be its invaluable medicinal qualities. (Medieval legend)

Azoth, a universal medicine or universal solvent sought in alchemy. (Medieval legend)

Cold iron, is historically believed to repel, contain, or harm ghosts, fairies, witches, and/or other malevolent supernatural creatures. (European folklore)

Elixir of life, a mythical potion that, when drunk from a certain cup at a certain time, supposedly grants the drinker eternal life and/or eternal youth. (Medieval legend)

Fairy dust, fairy ring are circles of mushrooms that seem to pop-up over night in yards. It is said to grow from the magic dust left behind by faeries as they danced and celebrated during the night, before returning to their hidden land. (English folklore)

Four Thieves Vinegar, a concoction of vinegar infused with herbs,spices or garlic that was believed to protect the user from the plague (disease). (European folklore)

Holy water, believed to ward off or act as a weapon against mythical evil creatures, such as vampires. In eastern Europe, one might sprinkle holy water onto the corpse of a suspected vampire to destroy it or render it inert. (European folklore)

Love potion, Tristan goes to Ireland to bring back Isolde the fair for his uncle King Mark to marry. Along the way, they ingest a love potion which causes the pair to fall madly in love. (Arthurian legend)

Prima materia (also Materia Prima or First Matter), is the ubiquitous starting material required for the alchemical magnum opus and the creation of the philosopher's stone. It is the primitive formless base of all matter similar to chaos, the quintessence, or aether. (Medieval legend)

Sandman's sand, which the Sandman uses to put people to sleep and bring good dreams by sprinkling it into their eyes while they sleep. (European folklore)

Yliaster, is the formless base of all matter which is the raw material for the alchemical Great Work. (Medieval legend)

Unspoken Water, water believed to have healing properties when collected "from under a bridge, over which the living pass and the dead are carried, brought in the dawn or twilight to the house of a sick person, without the bearer's speaking, either in going or returning". (Scottish folklore)

Water of life, water from the Fountain of Youth that supposedly restores the youth of anyone who drinks or bathes in its waters. (Medieval legend)

Sleeping potion, the troll princess who lives in a castle east of the sun and west of the moon gives the prince a sleeping drink, so that the youngest daughter cannot wake him. (Scandinavian folklore)

Substances from Mesoamerican mythology

Teonanácatl, in Nahuatl literally "god mushroom"—compound of the words teo(tl) (god) and nanácatl (mushroom).

Substances from Asian mythology

Golden cosmic egg Hiranyagarbha by Manaku

Hihīrokane, described in the apocryphal Takenouchi Document, an alleged ancient writing in a lost script which details Japan's early history, Hihīrokane was used in the time of Emperor Jimmu, Japan's first emperor. The Kusanagi-no-tsurugi and the other Imperial Regalia of Japan are supposedly made from it. Its weight is lighter than gold, but harder than diamond. It was even said to be able to bring water to a boil without heat, violating the Law of Conservation of Energy. (Japanese mythology)

Hiranyagarbha, the source of the creation of the universe or the manifested cosmos. (Hindu mythology)

Halahala, a poison created from the sea when the gods and demons churned it to obtain Amrita, the nectar of immortality. (Hindu mythology)

Prana, is all cosmic energy, permeating the Universe on all levels. Prana is often referred to as the "life force" or "life energy". It also includes energies present in inanimate objects. (Hindu mythology)

Five Flavored Tea of Forgetfulness, a brew created by Meng Po that is given to each soul to drink before they leave Diyu. The brew induces instant and permanent amnesia, and all memory of other lives is lost. (Chinese mythology)

Qi (also Chi or Ki), an active principle forming part of any living thing. Qi literally translates as "breath", "air", or "gas", and figuratively as "material energy", "life force", or "energy flow". Qi is the central underlying principle in traditional Chinese medicine and martial arts. (Chinese mythology)

Chakra, an energy point or node in the subtle body. Chakras are believed to be part of the subtle body, not the physical body, and as such, are the meeting points of the subtle (non-physical) energy channels called Nadi. (Hinduism/Jainism/Buddhism)

Yin and yang, a concept of dualism, describing how seemingly opposite or contrary forces may actually be complementary, interconnected, and interdependent in the natural world, and how they may give rise to each other as they interrelate to one another. (Chinese mythology)

Musical instruments

Conchs

Vishnu with his Panchajanya

Nandi Vardhanam, the conch shell of Satyaki. (Hindu mythology)

Panchajanya, a Shankha conch shell of the Hindu god Vishnu. As per Valmiki Ramyana, Purushottama (Vishnu) killed a Danava named Panchajana on a mountain named Chakravan constructed by Vishwakarma and took away conch shell known as Panchajanya from him. (Hindu mythology)

Shankha, a conch shell and sacred emblem of the Hindu preserver god Vishnu. (Hindu mythology)

Triton's conch shell, a twisted conch shell on which Triton blew like a trumpet to calm or raise the waves. (Greek mythology)

Drums

Drake's Drum, a snare drum that Sir Francis Drake took with him when he circumnavigated the world. Shortly before he died he ordered the drum to be taken to Buckland Abbey and vowed that if England was ever in danger and someone was to beat the drum he would return to defend the country. According to legend it can be heard to beat at times when England is at war or significant national events take place. (English folklore)

Cultrun, a Mapuche drum that the Machi's use for healing. (Chilean mythology)

Flutes

Pied piper

Pan's flute, reed pipes or pan flute that is played by the god of the wild, Pan. (Greek mythology)

Pied Piper's magic pipe, which the Pied Piper used to lure the rats, and later children, out of Hamelin. (German folklore)

Harps

Bragi's harp, a magical golden harp given to Bragi by the dwarfs when he was born. (Norse mythology)

David's harp (also Kinnor David), a harp hung above King David's bed, and precisely at midnight a north wind arrived and blew on the harp and it would play by itself. (Jewish mythology)

Kantele, the mage Väinämöinen makes the first kantele from the jawbone of a giant pike and a few hairs from Hiisi's stallion. The music it makes draws all the forest creatures near to wonder at its beauty. (Finnish mythology)

Uaithne (also Dur da Blá, The Oak of Two Blossoms, and Coir Cethar Chuin), the harp which belongs to The Dagda. After the Second Battle of Mag Tuired the Fomorians had taken The Dagda's harp with them. The Dagda found it in a feasting-house wherein Bres and his father Elathan were also. The Dagda had bound the music so that it would not sound until he would call to it. After he called to it, it sprang from the wall, came to the Dagda and killed nine men on its way. (Irish mythology)

Binnorie's harp (also Minnorie's harp), when the murdered girl's body floats ashore, a musician made a musical instrument out of it, a harp, with a frame of bone and the girl's "long yellow hair" for strings. The instrument then plays itself and sings about the

murder. (Northumbrian folklore)

Talyn Arthur (Arthur's Harp), the name of the constellation of Lyra in Wales. (Welsh mythology)

Canola's harp (Cana's Harp), Canola realised the wind had created the music by blowing through partially rotted sinew still attached to a whale skeleton. She designed the harp based on this. (Irish mythology)

Horns

Horn of Gabriel, a horn blown by the Archangel Gabriel to announce Judgement Day. (Christian mythology)

Olifant (also Olivant), the horn of Roland, paladin of Charlemagne in the Song of Roland. Roland blows the horn, but the force required bursts his temple, resulting in death. His olifant was supposedly a unicorn's horn. (Matter of France)

Gjallarhorn, a mystical horn blown at the onset of Ragnarök associated with the god Heimdallr and the wise being Mimir. (Norse mythology)

Lyres

Amphion's lyre, a gift to Amphion from his lover Hermes that allowed Amphion to telekinetically move stones to build the walls of Thebes. (Greek mythology)

Apollo's lyre, Hermes created the lyre for him from the entrails of one of Apollo's cows. Apollo was furious at Hermes, but after hearing the sound of the lyre, his anger faded. The instrument became a common attribute of Apollo. (Greek mythology)

Orpheus' lyre, a golden lyre given to him by Apollo. It is said that Orpheus' music and singing could charm the birds, fish and wild beasts, coax the trees and rocks into dance, and divert the course of rivers. It is state that his lyre was placed in the sky by Zeus. (Greek mythology)

Rattles

Sistrum, one of the most sacred musical instruments in ancient Egypt, which was believed to hold powerful magical properties. It was also shaken to avert the flooding of the Nile and to frighten away Set. (Egyptian mythology)

Trumpets

seven angels with seven trumpets

Seven trumpets, seven angels with seven trumpets are sounded and the events that follow are described in detail from Revelation Chapters 8 to 11. (Christian mythology)

seven trumpets of Zahhak, Seven golden trumpets, each of which was connected to one of the seven realms of the world, and by blowing each of those trumpets, Zahhak would send down deadly disasters such as plagues, earthquakes, and rain of fire on that land. (Persian mythology)

Pheme's trumpet, Pheme is the goddess of gossip and she was said to have pried into the affairs of mortals and gods. She then repeated what she had learned by sounding her trumpet to spread the gossip to people near and far. (Greek mythology)

Joshua's shofars (also Joshua's trumpets), the walls of Jericho fell after Joshua's Israelite army marched around the city blowing their trumpets during the Battle of Jericho. (Jewish mythology)

Springs

Fountain of Youth

Fountain of Youth, a spring that supposedly restores the youth of anyone who drinks or bathes in its waters. (Medieval legend)

Mímisbrunnr (Mímir's well), a well associated with the being Mímir, located beneath Yggdrasil. The water of the well contains much wisdom, and that Odin's eye sacrifice to the well was in exchange for a drink from it. (Norse mythology)

Hvergelmir (Bubbling Boiling Spring), a major spring. (Norse mythology)

Urðarbrunnr (also Well of Wyrð), a well that lies beneath Yggdrasil, and is associated with a trio of norns (Urðr, Verðandi, and Skuld). (Norse mythology)

Holy well (also Sacred Spring), a spring revered either in a Pagan or Christian context, often both. Holy wells were frequently pagan sacred sites that later became Christianized. The term holy well is commonly employed to refer to any water source of limited size (i.e. not a lake or river, but including pools and natural springs and seeps), which has some significance in the folklore of the area where it is located, whether in the form of a particular name, an associated legend, the attribution of healing qualities to the water through the numinous presence of its guardian spirit or Christian saint.

Wishing well, wells where it was thought that any spoken wish would be granted. The idea that a wish would be granted came from the idea that water housed deities or had been placed there as a gift from the gods, since water was a source of life and often a scarce commodity. (European folklore)

Lake of fire, a lake of fire where the wicked dead are thrown into. (Egyptian/Christian)

Connla's Well (also Well of Coelrind, Well of Nechtan or Well of Segais), one of a number of otherworldly wells that are variously depicted as "The Well of Wisdom", "The Well of Knowledge" and the source of some of the rivers of Ireland. Much like the Well of Nechtan (and some sources equate the two), the well is the home to the salmon of wisdom, and surrounded with hazel trees, which also signify knowledge and wisdom. (Irish mythology)

Furniture

Tissot Moses and Joshua in the Tabernacle

Hlidskjalf, Odin's all-seeing throne in his palace Valaskjálf. (Norse mythology)

Round Table, King Arthur's famed table, around which he and his Knights congregate. As its name suggests, it has no head, implying that everyone who sits there has equal status. (Arthurian legend)

Siege Perilous (The Perilous Seat), a vacant seat at the Round Table reserved by Merlin for the knight who would one day be successful in the quest for the Holy Grail. (Arthurian legend)

Golden Throne, Hephaestus gained revenge against Hera for rejecting him by making her a magical golden throne which when she sat on it, did not allow her to stand up. (Greek mythology)

Ara (Altar), identified as the altar where the gods first made offerings and formed an alliance before defeating the Titans. (Greek mythology)

Ark of the Covenant (also Ark of the Testimony), a wooden chest clad with gold containing the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments as well as Aaron's rod and a pot of manna. (Jewish mythology)

Busby's stoop chair (also Dead Man's Chair), a haunted oak chair that was cursed by the murderer Thomas Busby before his execution by hanging in North Yorkshire, United Kingdom. (English folklore)

Throne of God (also Araboth and al-'Arsh), the reigning centre of God of the Abrahamic religions: primarily Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. The throne is said by various holy books to reside beyond the Seventh Heaven.

Khnum's potter's wheel, he was thought to be the creator of the bodies of human children, which he made at a potter's wheel, from clay, and placed in their mothers' wombs. (Egyptian mythology)

The bed of Procrustes, An iron bed used by Procrustes in which he would place his victims inside of. (Greek mythology)

Throne of Gems, The mythical Iranian King Jamshid saved mankind from a winter destined to kill every living creature. He constructed a throne made of precious gems. He sat on the throne, demons lifted him into the heavens where he shone like the Sun and winter was defeated. (Iranian mythology)

Ropes and chains

Thread of Ariadne, the magical ball of thread given to Theseus by Ariadne to help him navigate the Labyrinth. (Greek Mythology)

Lædingr, a chain forged by Thor to bind and were broken by Fenrir. (Norse Mythology)

Dromi, another chain to bind Fenrir. (Norse Mythology)

Gleipnir, the fetter that successfully bound the wolf Fenrir. It was light and thin as silk but strong as creation itself and made from six impossible ingredients. (Norse mythology)

Red string of fate, an East Asian belief originating from Chinese legend. According to this myth, the gods tie an invisible red cord around the ankles of those that are destined to meet one another in a certain situation or help each other in a certain way. Often, in Japanese culture, it is thought to be tied around the little finger. According to Chinese legend, the deity in charge of "the red thread" is believed to be Yuè Xià Lǎorén (月下老人), often abbreviated to Yuè Lǎo (月老), the old lunar matchmaker god, who is in charge of marriages. (Chinese mythology)

Prometheus's chains, unbreakable shackles of adamantite that were made by Hephaestus and broken by Heracles. (Greek mythology)

Body parts

Heads

Brazen head (also brass head or bronze head), a legendary automaton reputed to be able to answer any question. (Medieval legend)

Mímir's head, the severed head of Mimir, which was magically preserved by Odin so it could continue to provide knowledge and counsel as his advisor. (Norse mythology)

Medusa's head, the severed head of Medusa, which was given to Athena by Perseus to place on her Aegis. (Greek mythology)

Ymir's skull, Norðri, Suðri, Austri and Vestri each support one of the four cardinal points. Together, they uphold the heavenly dome, created from the skull of the jötunn Ymir. (Norse mythology)

Bendigeidfran's head, the severed head of Brân the Blessed, which was buried in London facing France to magically ward off invasion. (Welsh mythology)

Eyes

Odin's eye, Odin sacrifice his eye to Mímir for the price of wisdom, a drink from the Mímisbrunnr. (Norse mythology)

Eye of Horus, Set and Horus were fighting for the throne after Osiris's death, Set gouged out Horus's left eye. The majority of the eye was restored by Thoth. When Horus's eye was recovered, he offered it to his father, Osiris, in hopes of restoring his life. (Egyptian mythology)

Graeae's eye, three sisters who shared one eye among themselves. (Greek mythology)

Eye of Ra, Ra was becoming old and weak and the people no longer respected him or his rule. Ra did not react well to this and decided to punish mankind by sending his Eye to find them. (Egyptian mythology)

Balor's eye, a large eye that wreaks destruction when opened. The Cath Maige Tuired calls it a "destructive" and "poisonous" eye that no army can withstand. (Irish mythology)

Eye of Providence, a symbol showing an eye often surrounded by rays of light or a glory and usually enclosed by a triangle. It represents the eye of God watching over mankind or divine providence.

Pjazi's eyes, Odin took Pjazi's eyes and placed them in the night sky as stars. (Norse mythology)

Shiva's third eye, it could burn even gods to ashes. (Hindu mythology)

Limbs

Hand of God

Hand of Glory, a severed pickled hand of a man who was hanged alive. Said to have the power to unlock any door and, if a candle was placed within made from some body part of the same person, would freeze in place anyone who it was given to. (European folklore)

Týr's hand, which was bitten off by Fenrir. (Norse mythology)

Hand of God (also Manus Dei and Dexter a domini/dei), ", a motif in Jewish and Christian art, especially of the Late Antique and early medieval periods, when depiction of Jehovah or God the Father as a full human figure was considered unacceptable. The hand, sometimes including a portion of an arm, or ending about the wrist, is used to indicate the intervention in or approval of affairs on Earth by God, and sometimes as a subject in itself. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology)

Aurvandils-tá (Aurvandill's toe), the god Thor tosses Aurvandill's toe which had frozen into the sky to form a star called Aurvandils-tá. (Norse mythology)

Hair, feathers and skin

Jason returns with Golden fleece

Golden Fleece, sought by Jason and the Argonauts. The fleece of the golden winged ram, which was sought by Jason and the Argonauts. (Greek mythology)

Firebird's plumage, the feathers of a Firebird that glows brightly emitting red, orange, and yellow light, like a bonfire that is just past the turbulent flame. The feathers do not cease glowing if removed, and one feather can light a large room if not concealed.

(Slavic mythology)

Feathers of Simurgh, the legendary Simurgh gave three of her feathers to Zal, the Persian hero and also father of Rostam, so that whenever he needed the guidance or

help of Simurgh, he could burn one of the feathers and Simurgh came to his aid.
(Persian mythology)

Feather of Ma'at (also Feather of Truth), her ostrich feather was the measure that determined whether the souls of the departed would reach the fields of Aaru successfully. The hearts of the dead were said to be weighed against her single feather in the Hall of Two Truths. (Egyptian mythology)

Peacock's feather, the peacock was the patron bird of the Goddess Hera. According to myth, she adorned the tail of a peacock with Argus's eyes on its feathers in his honor, symbolizing all-seeing knowledge and the wisdom of the heavens. (Greek mythology)

Leviathan's hide, could be turned into everlasting clothing or impenetrable suits of armor.
(Jewish mythology)

Nemean lion's hide, the lion could not be killed with mortal weapons because its golden fur was impervious to attacks. (Greek mythology)

Selkie's skin, selkies are said to live as seals in the sea but shed their skin to become human on land. If a man steals a female selkie's skin, she is in his power and is forced to become his wife. If she finds her skin she will return to her true home in the sea.
(European folklore)

Coma Berenices (Berenice's hair), Berenice II of Egypt dedicated her hair to Aphrodite for her husband's safe return from Syria, and placed it in the temple of the goddess at Zephyrium. The hair had been carried to the heavens and placed among the stars.
(Egyptian mythology)

Ymir's hair, Odin, Vili and Vé used his hair for the trees. (Norse mythology)

Ymir's eyebrows, Odin, Vili and Vé used his eyebrows to create the middle realm in which humans live, Midgard. (Norse mythology)

Blood and flesh

Heracles would use arrows dipped in the Hydra's poisonous blood to kill other foes during his Labours, such as Stymphalian birds and the giant

Hydra's poisonous blood, Heracles would use arrows dipped in the Hydra's poisonous blood to kill other foes during his Labours, such as Stymphalian birds and the giant Geryon. (Greek mythology)

Ningyo's flesh, the flesh is pleasant-tasting and anyone who eats it will attain remarkable longevity. (Japanese mythology)

Fafnir's blood, Sigurd bathed in dragon's blood that conferred him invulnerability. He also drank some of Fafnir's blood and gained the ability to understand the language of the birds. (Norse mythology)

Blood of Christ, the blood shed by Jesus Christ on the Cross. (Christian mythology)

Ichor, the ethereal golden fluid that is the blood of the gods. (Greek mythology)

Ymir's flesh, Odin, Vili and Vé fashioned the Earth from his flesh. (Norse mythology)

Ymir's blood, Odin, Vili and Vé used his blood to form the ocean. (Norse mythology)

Bones and horns

Unicorn horn (also Alicorn), the detached horn of a unicorn was thought to have many healing properties and antidote's virtues were attributed to the unicorn's horn.
(European folklore)

Dragon's teeth, in the legends of the Phoenician prince Cadmus and in Jason's quest for

the Golden Fleece. In each case, the dragons are real and breathe fire. Their teeth, once planted, would grow into fully armed warriors. (Greek mythology)

Camahueto's horn, the most valuable part of a Camahueto is their single horn, machis will use the horn for curing many kinds of illnesses. (Chilote mythology)

Ymir's bones, Odin, Vili and Vé used his bones to make the hills. (Norse mythology)

Organs

Valknut (also Hrungrnir's Heart), Hrungrnir's head, heart, and shield were made of stone. His heart had a peculiar shape, it was triangular due to which both the Valknut and the Triquetra have been called Hrungrnir's heart. (Norse mythology)

Fafnir's heart, which was roasted and consumed by Sigurd, giving him the gift of prophecy. (Norse mythology)

Ymir's brain, which was used by Odin, Vili and Vé to make the clouds. (Norse mythology)

Uranus's genitals, which fell on the ocean and formed Aphrodite, a nymph who later on became the goddess of beauty after being introduced to at Olympus (Greek mythology)

Containers

Basket of Existence, a raffia basket containing the divine ingredients that were to be used by Obatala to create the universe. It was stolen by his fellow orisha Oduduwa before he could do so. (Yoruba mythology)

Óðrerir, refers either to one of the vessels that contain the mead of poetry (along with Boðn and Són) or to the mead itself. (Norse mythology)

Pot of Gold, which is used by leprechauns to store away all their coins at the end of the rainbow. (Irish mythology)

Hamper of Gwyddno Garanhir, Gwyddno Garanhir possessed a hamper which would multiply food: if one was to put food for one man in the basket and open it again, the food was found to be increased a hundredfold. (Welsh mythology)

Horn of Brân Galed, the Horn of Brân Galed from the North is said to have possessed the magical property of ensuring that "whatever drink might be wished for was found in it". (Welsh mythology)

Pandora's box (also Pandora's pithos), a large jar given to Pandora which contained all the evils of the world. Pandora opened the jar and all the evils flew out, leaving only Hope inside once she had closed it again. (Greek mythology)

Excalibur's scabbard, was said to have powers of its own. Injuries from losses of blood, for example, would not kill the bearer. In some telling, wounds received by one wearing the scabbard did not bleed at all. (Arthurian legend)

Osiris's coffin, a beautifully carved coffin made by Set. Osiris was tricked by Set to enter the chest, and was enclosed inside it by 72 accomplices of Set. Set flung the coffer in the Nile so that it would drift far away. (Egyptian mythology)

Purple Gold Red Gourd, a powerful magic gourd that sucks anyone who speaks before it inside and melts them down into a bloody stew. (Chinese mythology)

Trojan Horse, a wooden horse where a select force of men hide inside during the Trojan War, the subterfuge that the Greeks used to enter the city of Troy and win the war. (Greek mythology)

Ark of bulrushes, a container which carried the infant Moses. (Christian mythology/Jewish mythology)

Bags

Bag of Mysteries, the pouch containing the secrets that were supposed to be the reward of the spirit responsible for the creation of the world. It was originally given by Olorun to Obatala, who was mandated by Him to serve that function, but was subsequently stolen by his brother/sister/spouse Oduduwa when he/she usurped his position as creator spirit. This and the simultaneous theft of the Basket of Existence (see above) later led to a war between them. (Yoruba mythology)

Bag of Wind, Aeolus gave Odysseus a tightly closed leather bag full of the captured winds so he could sail easily home to Ithaca on the gentle West Wind. (Greek mythology)

Corrbolg, a bag crafted by Manannán mac Lir from the skin of Aoife who had been transformed into a crane at the time of her death. It was later given to Conaire Mór and then eventually to Cumhall mac Trénmhóir. The crane bag contained a variable amount of items depending on if the tide was high or low. (Irish mythology)

Qiankun Dai, one of the ten ancient artifacts, the universe bag or cosmos bag is a bag belonging to Maitreya that is able to fit all of heaven and earth inside. (Chinese Mythology)

Kibisis, the sack in which the mythical hero Perseus carried the severed head of the monster Medusa. (Greek mythology)

Santa's bag, carries a bag full of presents for children. (Modern folklore)

Cups and chalices

The Giving of the Seven Bowls of Wrath / The First Six Plagues, Revelation 16:1–16.
Matthias Gerung, c. 1531

Cup of Jamshid (Jām-e Jam), a cup of divination that was long possessed by rulers of ancient Persia and was said to be filled with an elixir of immortality. (Persian mythology)

Nanteos Cup, a medieval wood mazer bowl attributed with the ability to heal those who drink from it. (Christian mythology)

Holy Grail, a dish, plate, stone, or cup that is part of an important theme of Arthurian literature. (Arthurian legend/Christian mythology)

Holy Chalice, the vessel which Jesus used at the Last Supper to serve the wine. (Christian mythology)

Crater (Cup), identified with the cup of the god Apollo. (Greek mythology)

Seven bowls, seven angels are thus given seven bowls of God's wrath, each consisting of judgements full of the wrath of God. These seven bowls of God's wrath are poured out on the wicked and the followers of the Antichrist after the sounding of the seven trumpets. (Christian mythology)

Lamps and lanterns

Lantern of Diogenes, carried by the Cynic philosopher Diogenes of Sinope to aid in his fruitless search for an honest man. (Greek philosophy)

Magic Lamp, an oil lamp that can be rubbed to summon a genie who grants wishes. (Arabic mythology)

Sculptures

Golem and Loew

Palladium, a wooden statue that fell from the sky. As long as it stayed in Troy, the city-state could not lose a war. (Greek mythology)

Ushabti, a funerary figurine used in Ancient Egypt. Ushabtis were placed in tombs among the grave goods and were intended to act as servants or minions for the deceased, should they be called upon to do manual labor in the afterlife. (Egyptian mythology)

Ikenga, a statue that bestows its owner with super strength. (Igbo mythology)

Obelisk, a tall, four-sided, narrow tapering monument which ends in a pyramid-like shape or pyramidion at the top. The obelisk symbolized the sun god Ra, and during the brief religious reformation of Akhenaten was said to be a petrified ray of the Aten, the sundisk. It was also thought that the god existed within the structure. (Egyptian mythology)

Galatea, a statue carved of ivory by Pygmalion of Cyprus, which the goddess Aphrodite brought to life before uniting the couple in marriage. (Greek mythology)

Golem, an animated anthropomorphic being that is magically created entirely from inanimate matter (specifically clay or mud). The word was used to mean an amorphous, unformed material in Psalms and medieval writing. There are many tales differing on how the golem was brought to life and afterwards controlled. (Jewish folklore)

Terracotta Army, a collection of terracotta sculptures depicting the armies of Qin Shi Huang, the first Emperor of China. The figures include warriors, chariots and horses whose purpose was to protect the emperor in his afterlife. (Chinese mythology)

Mirrors

Oshun's mirror, a mirror that the river spirit Oshun keeps upon her person and uses as her symbol as the goddess of beauty. (Yoruba mythology)

Smoking mirror, the mirror used by the god Tezcatlipoca to see the whole cosmos. (Aztec mythology)

Yata no Kagami, a mirror representing wisdom that was offered to the goddess of the sun, Amaterasu. (Japanese mythology)

Archimedes's mirror, used by Archimedes to focus sunlight onto ships attacking Syracuse, causing them to catch fire. (Greek mythology)

Logun Ede's mirror, given as a gift from his mother, Oshun. (Yoruba mythology)

Snowwhite's stepmother's mirror, a talking mirror that serves Snow White's stepmother by answering her questions. (German folklore)

Dispensers

Sampo (also Sammas), a magical artifact constructed by Ilmarinen that brought good fortune to its holder. (Finnish mythology)

Skatert-Samobranka (Magic Tablecloth), a magic tablecloth is spread on the ground, saying the magic words and food and drink aplenty will appear. When finished eating, rolling up all the dirty plates, cutlery, and crumbs into the tablecloth and they magically disappear. (Russian folklore)

Halter of Clydno Eiddyn, belonged to Clydno Eiddyn (Cebystr Clydno Eiddin). It was fixed to a staple at the foot of his bed. Whatever horse he might wish for, he would find in the halter. The Halter of Clydno Eiddyn was also called The Handy Halter, for it summons fine horses. (Welsh mythology)

Akshaya Patra, a wonderful vessel given to Yudishtira by the Lord Surya which provided

a never-ending supply of food to the Pandavas every day. (Hindu mythology)
Crock and Dish of Rhygenydd Ysgolhaig, whatever food might be wished for in them, it would be found on them. It belonged to Rhygenydd the Cleric. (Welsh mythology)
Cornucopia (also Horn of Plenty), the horn of the goat-nymph Amalthea from which poured an unceasing abundance of nectar, ambrosia, and fruit. (Greek mythology)
Manna machine, a machine described within the Zohar writings that is similar to chlorella algae processing of today. (Jewish mythology)
Akshaya Tunir, an inexhaustible quiver of arrows belonging to Arjuna. (Hindu mythology)
Bridges

Adam's Bridge also called as Rama Setu
As-Sirāt, a narrow bridge which every person must pass on the Yawm ad-Din ("Day of the Way of Life" i.e. Day of Judgment) to enter Paradise. (Islamic mythology)
Bifröst, a burning rainbow bridge that reaches between Midgard (the world) and Asgard, the realm of the gods. (Norse mythology)
Chinvat Bridge (also Bridge of the Requirer), a sifting bridge which separates the world of the living from the world of the dead and is guarded by two four-eyed dogs. (Zoroastrianism)
Gjallarbrú (Gjöll Bridge), a covered bridge which spans the river Gjöll and must be crossed in order to reach Hel. (Norse mythology)
Rama Setu (also Rama's Bridge), a floating bridge across the sea constructed by the apes Nala and Nila in the epic poem Ramayana. (Hindu mythology)
Ame-no-ukihashi (Floating Bridge of Heaven), Izanagi and Izanami went to the bridge between heaven and earth to churn the sea below with Amenonuhoko. (Japanese mythology)

Columns

Djed, Isis asked for the pillar in the palace hall from the king and queen of Byblos in Lebanon, and upon being granted it, extracted the coffin from the pillar. She then consecrated the pillar, anointing it with myrrh and wrapping it in linen. This pillar came to be known as the pillar of djed. (Egyptian mythology)
Stambha (also Skambha), a cosmic column which joins the heaven (Svarga) and the earth (prithvi). (Hindu mythology)
Column of the Flagellation, the column which Jesus was tied to during the Flagellation of Christ, kept in the Basilica of Saint Praxedes in Rome. (Christian mythology)
Pillar of heaven, four pillars held Heaven and the goddess Nüwa repaired the pillars after the time when Heaven and Earth were in disruption. (Chinese mythology)
Pillar of salt, Lot's wife was turned into a pillar of salt when she looked back at the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah as they were destroyed. (Christian mythology)
Pillars of Hercules, Hercules raised two pillars at the Strait of Gibraltar when he passed by during one of his ten labours. The tenth labour was to obtain the Cattle of Geryon. (Greek mythology)
Ame-no-mihashira (Heavenly Pillar), Izanagi and Izanami came down from heaven and spontaneously built a central support column called the Ame-no-mihashira which upheld the "hall measuring eight fathoms" that the gods caused to appear afterwards. (Japanese mythology)

Gates

Gates of Alexander, a legendary barrier supposedly built by Alexander the Great to keep the uncivilized barbarians of the north from invading the land to the south. (Medieval legend)

Gates of hell, various places on the surface of the world that have acquired a legendary reputation for being entrances to the underworld. Often they are found in regions of unusual geological activity, particularly volcanic areas, or sometimes at lakes, caves or mountains.

Pearly gates, a conceptual entry to Heaven. (Christian mythology)

Torii, the world was plunged into darkness and chaos. The wrath of Amaterasu, the Goddess of the Sun, led her to retreat to a cave in Amano-Iwato. To make her come out again, the Gods thought over several solutions and decided to set a perch with roosters at the entrance of the cave. They would then sing eternally. Intrigued by their songs, the Amaterasu walked out of the cave, and the world was again bathed in light. Later, people decided to build bird perches at the entrances of shrines. (Japanese mythology)

Gates of Tartarus, a gate flanked by adamantine columns, a substance so hard that nothing can cut through it, akin to diamond. (Roman mythology)

Nets

Indra's net, one of the weapons of the sky-god Indra, used to snare and entangle enemies. The net also signifies magic or illusion. (Hindu mythology)

Rán's net, a net in which she tried to capture men who ventured out on the sea. Her net is also mentioned in *Reginismál* and in the *Völsunga saga*, where she lends it to Loki so that he can capture Andvari. (Norse mythology)

Ogun's net, the unbreakable net that Ogun used to trap his wife Oya and her lover Shango when he caught them engaging in sexual activity. He subsequently dragged them, while still bound, before Olorun for judgement. In the versions of this myth from the Yoruba diaspora, the wife involved is Oshun. (Yoruba mythology)

Sobek's net, Sobek caught the Four sons of Horus in a net in the Nile river. (Egyptian mythology)

Hephaistos' net

Weighing scales

Libra (Weighing Scales), held by Dike or Astraea, the goddess of justice. (Greek and Roman mythology)

Scale of Maat, Anubis weighed the person's heart on a scale against the feather of Maat. If the heart is lighter than the feather, the person is allowed to pass into the afterlife. If not, the heart is eaten by Ammit. (Egyptian mythology)

Scale of justice, Themis was portrayed carrying scales. (Greek mythology)

Mul Zibanu (Scales or Balance), which were held sacred to the sun god Shamash, who was also the patron of truth and justice. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Famine's pair of scales, the third of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse rides on a Black Horse is Famine, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. (Christian mythology)

Sharpening stones

Odin's whetstone, Baugi had nine thralls who killed each other in their desire to possess Odin's magical sharpening stone. (Norse mythology)

Whetstone of Tudwal Tudglyd, sharpens the blade of a fine warrior. It shall draw blood from any enemy of its user if its user be brave; if its user shall be cowardly, than the blade shall not be sharpened and draw no blood whatsoever. (Welsh mythology)

Wheels

Fortune Wheel

Rota Fortunae (Wheel of Fortune), a concept referring to the capricious nature of Fate. The wheel belongs to the goddess Fortuna, who spins it at random, changing the positions of those on the wheel – some suffer great misfortune, while others gain windfalls. (Greek mythology)

Wheel of time (also wheel of history and Kalachakra), is a concept found in several religious traditions and philosophies, which regard time as cyclical and consisting of repeating ages. (Hindu mythology)

Wheel of fire, which Ixion was bound to as punishment for lusting after Zeus's wife, Hera. (Greek mythology)

Buildings

Giza pyramids

Pyramid, a belief that the ancient Egyptian pyramids and objects of similar shape can confer a variety of benefits. Among these assumed properties are the ability to preserve foods, sharpen or maintain the sharpness of razor blades, etc. (Egyptian mythology)

World Mill (also Heavenly Mill and Cosmic Mill), a theme suggested as recurring in Indo-European and other mythologies. It involves the analogy of the cosmos or firmament and a rotating millstone. (Proto-Indo-European religion)

Tower of Babel, a united humanity agreed to build a tower "tall enough to reach heaven"; seeing this, God, confounded their speech so that they could no longer understand each other and scattered them around the world. (Jewish mythology/Christian mythology)

Heorot (Hall of the Hart), a mead-hall described in the Anglo-Saxon epic Beowulf as "the foremost of halls under heaven". It served as a palace for King Hroðgar, a legendary Danish king of the sixth century. (Anglo-Saxon mythology)

Ryūgū-jō (Dragon Palace Castle), undersea palace of Ryūjin, the dragon god of the sea. Depending on the version of the legend, it is built from red and white coral, or from solid crystal. (Japanese mythology)

Maleperduis, Reynard the Fox's principal hideaway, which is full of holes which Reynard can open and shut to elude his enemies. (Medieval legends)

Caer Dathyl, a fortress in Arfon in northern Gwynedd referred to in the Four Branches of the Mabinogi, the Tale of Math fab Mathonwy. (Welsh mythology)

Caer Sidi (also Caer Siddi), a legendary otherworld fortress mentioned in Middle Welsh mythological poems in the Book of Taliesin. (Welsh mythology)

Chicken-legged hut, Baba Yaga lives in a house standing on chicken legs, which enables the house to move about in accordance with Baba Yaga's wishes. When her house moves it spins while emitting a screeching noise. (Russian folklore)

Soria Moria Castle, the three princesses live in Soria Moria Castle, and only the West Wind knew where the castle was located. (Scandinavian folklore)

Santa's workshop, the legendary workshop where Santa Claus is said to make the toys

and presents, given out at Christmas. (Elf (film))
Wings

The fall of Icarus

Icarus' wings, which were made by Daedalus out of wax and bird feathers.

Egil' wings, Völund is held captive at Nidung's court. To help his brother, Egil shoots birds and collects their feathers, of which Völund makes a pair of wings and flies away. (Norse mythology)

Astronomical objects

Nibiru, a pseudoscientific proposed outer planet within the Solar System, described by Zecharia Sitchin.

Planet X, a hypothetical planet, now disproven, proposed in 1906 by Percival Lowell to have existed beyond the planet Neptune.

Sun, the earliest understanding of the Sun was that of a disk in the sky, whose presence above the horizon creates day and whose absence causes night. In the Bronze Age, this understanding was modified by assuming that the Sun is transported across the sky in a boat or a chariot, and transported back to the place of sunrise during the night passing through the underworld. In many cultures, such as Aboriginal and Native American legends, the raven stole the sun and placed it in the sky.

Counter-Earth (also Antichthon), a hypothetical planet always on the other side of the Sun from Earth.

Kolob, a star or planet described in the Book of Abraham. It is the heavenly body nearest to the Throne of God. (Book of Mormon)

Neith, a hypothetical natural satellite of Venus reportedly sighted by Giovanni Cassini in 1672 and by several other astronomers in following years.

Chiron, the name given to a supposed moon of Saturn sighted by Hermann Goldschmidt in 1861. It has since been determined that no such moon exists.

Themis, William H. Pickering announced the discovery of a tenth satellite of Saturn. The photographic plates on which it supposedly appeared, thirteen in all, spanned a period between April 17 and July 8, 1904. However, no other astronomer has ever confirmed Pickering's claim.

Phaeton, an hypothetical planet hypothesized by the Titius–Bode law to have existed between the orbits of Mars and Jupiter, the destruction of which supposedly led to the formation of the asteroid belt (including the dwarf planet Ceres).

Tyche, an hypothetical gas giant located in the Solar System's Oort cloud, first proposed in 1999 by astrophysicists John Matese, Patrick Whitman and Daniel Whitmire of the University of Louisiana at Lafayette.

Vulcan, a small hypothetical planet that was proposed to exist in an orbit between Mercury and the Sun. The 19th-century French mathematician Urbain Le Verrier hypothesized that peculiarities in Mercury's orbit were the result of another planet.

Vulcanoid, a hypothetical population of asteroids that orbit the Sun in a dynamically stable zone inside the orbit of the planet Mercury. They are named after the hypothetical planet Vulcan, whose existence was disproven in 1915 with the advent of general relativity. So far, no vulcanoids have been discovered, and it is not yet clear whether any exist.

Planet V, a hypothetical fifth terrestrial planet posited by NASA scientists John Chambers and Jack J. Lissauer to have once existed between Mars and the asteroid belt.

Nemesis, a hypothetical red dwarf or brown dwarf, originally postulated in 1984 to be orbiting the Sun at a distance of about 95,000 AU (1.5 light-years), somewhat beyond the Oort cloud, to explain a perceived cycle of mass extinctions in the geological record, which seem to occur more often at intervals of 26 million years.

Lilith, a fictitious invisible second moon of Earth, supposedly about the same mass as the Earth's Moon, proposed in 1918 by astrologer Walter Gorn Old.

Star of Ishtar (also Star of Inanna), a symbol of the ancient Sumerian goddess Inanna and her East Semitic counterpart Ishtar. Because Ishtar was associated with the planet Venus, the star is also known as the Star of Venus. (Mesopotamian mythology)

Winged sun, a symbol associated with divinity, royalty and power. (Egyptian mythology)

Torture devices

Perillos being forced into the brazen bull that he built for Phalaris

Brazen bull (also Bronze bull or Sicilian bull), an alleged torture and execution device invented by Perillos of Athens, who offered it to Phalaris, the tyrant of Akragas, Sicily, as a new means of executing criminals.

Paolao, a legendary torture device created by the wicked fox spirit Daji. It was a tall bronze cylinder heated with charcoal, but if one fell off they would die. With no other alternatives one was forced to dance atop the cylinder until they died. (Chinese Mythology)

Tools

Holy Nails, the nails with which Christ was crucified. (Christian mythology)

Rati, a drill or auger that was used by Odin during his quest to obtain the mead of poetry. (Norse mythology)

Reginnaglar (Old Norse God Nails), are nails used for religious purposes. (Norse mythology)

Miscellaneous

Voodoo doll with pins in it, Museum of Witchcraft

Chessboard of Gwenddoleu ap Ceidio, a large chess board made of gold with pieces of silver and crystal. The pieces play by themselves if set up correctly. (Welsh mythology)

Neith's loom, which Neith uses to weave all of existence into being. (Egyptian mythology)

Father Time's hourglass, carrying an hourglass representing time's constant movement. Many believe that Father Time, like the Grim Reaper, is constantly watching humans and has each and every one of their hourglasses slowly decreasing, sand casually slipping through the hands of time.

Bangu, a bell in Glasgwm Church which was gifted by Saint David. Once a woman took the bell to the nearby town of Rhadr. Her husband was imprisoned in the castle and she believed that if she rang the bell he would be released. But the guards seized it and chased her out of town. That night the town was destroyed by fire, and the only part of it which escaped the flames was the wall on which the sacred bell was hanging. (Medieval

legend)

Voodoo doll, an effigy into which pins are inserted. Although it comes in various different forms, such practices are found in the magical traditions of many cultures across the world. (English folklore)

Dreamcatcher, the Ojibwe storytellers speak of the Spider Woman, known as Asibikaashi; she took care of the children and the people on the land. Eventually, the Ojibwe Nation spread across North America and it became difficult for Asibikaashi to reach all the children. So the mothers and grandmothers would weave magical webs for the children, using willow hoops and sinew, or cordage made from plants. The dreamcatchers would filter out all bad dreams and only allow good thoughts to enter our mind. Once the sun rises, all bad dreams just disappear. (Anishinaabe mythology)

Ibong Adarna's droppings, said to turn living beings into stone upon contact. (Philippine mythology)

Kave's apron, according to legend, a Persian blacksmith made a battle flag by hanging his smith's apron from a spear, and used it to rally the people against the wicked king, Zahak. (Persian mythology)

Koschei's needle, Koschei cannot be killed by conventional means targeting his body. His soul is hidden separate from his body inside a needle, which is in an egg, inside of a duck, inside of a hare, in an iron chest buried under a green oak tree, which is on the island of Buyan. (Slavic folklore)

Shirikodama, Kappas can gain power by taking human's shirikodama, a mythical ball said to contain the soul. (Japanese mythology)

Crystal skull, some individuals believe in the paranormal claim that crystal skulls can produce a variety of miracles.

Vasilisa's doll, Vasilisa's mother gave her a tiny wooden doll with instructions to give it a little to eat and a little to drink if she were in need. (Russian folklore)

Sheelah's brush (also Sheelagh's brush or Sheila's brush), the alleged wife of Saint Patrick who would sweep the winter away and gives one last snowstorm after Saint Patrick's Day. (Irish folklore)

Jacob's ladder, a ladder leading to heaven that was featured in a dream Jacob had during his flight from his brother Esau in the Book of Genesis. (Abrahamic religions)

Vase of Soissons, legendary sacred vase, probably in precious metal.

From Greek mythology

Winnowing Oar, an object that appears in Books XI and XXIII of Homer's Odyssey.

Athena's bridle, Polyeidon told Bellerophon to sleep in the temple of Athena. While he slept, he dreamed that Athena set a golden bridle beside him. He awoke and found the bridle he dreamt about in his hands. Afterwards, he went to the meadow Pegasus was grazing at, and was able to bridle and tame Pegasus without difficulty.

Talos, a giant bronze automaton to protect Europa in Crete from pirates and invaders.

From Norse mythology

Svefnthorn (Sleep Thorn), used to put an adversary into a deep sleep from which they would not awaken for a long time.

Friggerock (Frigg's distaff), the Orion's Belt asterism within the constellation of Orion was once known as "Frigg's Distaff". To explain this attribution, some scholars have pointed out that the constellation is on the celestial equator and thus the stars rotating in

the night sky may have been associated with Frigg's spinning wheel.

From Germanic heroic legend

Main article: List of named weapons, armour and treasures in Germanic heroic legend

From Christian mythology

Early Hebrew Conception of the Universe

Firmament, the structure above the atmosphere, conceived as a vast solid dome according to the Biblical cosmology. According to the Genesis creation narrative, God created the firmament to separate the "waters above" the earth from the "waters below" the earth.

True Cross, the name for the physical remnants which, by a Catholic church tradition, are believed to be from the cross upon which Jesus was crucified.

Shroud of Turin (also Turin Shroud), a length of linen cloth bearing the image of a man, is believed by some to be the burial shroud of Jesus of Nazareth.

Sudarium of Oviedo (also Shroud of Oviedo), a bloodstained piece of cloth that is claimed to be the cloth wrapped around the head of Jesus Christ after he died.

Image of Edessa, a holy relic consisting of a square or rectangle of cloth upon which a miraculous image of the face of Jesus had been imprinted.

Holy Sponge, a sponge dipped in vinegar (or in some translations sour wine), most likely posca, a favorite beverage of Roman soldiers, and offered to Christ to drink during the crucifixion.

From Hindu Mythology

Main article: List of mythological objects (Hindu Mythology)

From the Book of Mormon

Liahona, a compass-like device given by God to the prophet Lehi and his family to help them navigate through the wilderness. It was powered by faith and obedience to God and if anyone in the party lost faith or sinned, it would stop working until that person repented.

Title of Liberty, a battle standard used by Captain Moroni to rally the Nephites to arms against the armies of Amalickiah. It was made from Moroni's torn cloak, upon which he wrote, "In memory of our God, our religion, and freedom, and our peace, our wives, and our children".

Explanatory notes

Rule of thumb: include magical swords in *fornaldarsögur* but treat swords in *Sagas of Icelanders* or *sagas of the kings* as "historical"

References

Đại Việt sử ký toàn thư, *Peripheral Annals*, Vol. 1, sections 6b-7b

Carmen Campidoctoris o Poema latino del Campeador, Madrid, Sociedad Estatal España Nuevo Milenio, 2001

"1 Nephi 4". *Church of Jesus Christ.org*. Retrieved 2018-03-12.

Garbáty, Thomas Jay (1962). *The Fallible Sword: Inception of a Motif*. *The Journal of American Folklore*. American Folklore Society. ISBN 1-898577-10-2

Ludlow, John Malcolm Forbes (1865). "V. Sub-cycle of the Peers: Ogier of Denmark". *Popular Epics of the Middle Ages of the Norse-German and Carolingian Cycles*. Vol. 2. London: Macmillan and Company. p. 256.

Ludlow (1865), p. 296.
Cantar de mio Cid. Edition of Alberto Montaner. Ed. Galaxia Gutenberg, 2007.
Don Juan Manuel. El Conde Lucanor. Barcelona: Losada, 1997.
Cantar de mio Cid Edition of Alberto Montaner. Ed. Galaxia Gutenberg, 2007.
The History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire. Vol. 3 Ch. XXXIV Part 1.
Archived from the original on 2007-01-28.
"GORZ". Encyclopædia Iranica. Retrieved 21 April 2019.
Sri Dharmaraja[permanent dead link]
Smith, Bardwell L (1982). Hinduism: New Essays in the History of Religions. ISBN 9004067884.

Florus. Epitomae, 1.33.
D'après l'épigraphie cambodgienne du X^e siècle, les rois des "Kambuja" prétendaient descendre d'un ancêtre mythique éponyme, le sage ermite Kambu, et de la nymphe céleste Mera, dont le nom a pu être forgé d'après l'appellation ethnique "khmèr" (George Coédès). [1][permanent dead link]; See also: Indianised States of Southeast Asia, 1968, p 66, George Coédès.
Taylor, Keith Weller (1983), The Birth of the Vietnam, University of California Press, p. 21, ISBN 9780520074170
Kelley, Liam C. (2014). "Constructing Local Narratives: Spirits, Dreams, and Prophecies in the Medieval Red River Delta". In Anderson, James A.; Whitmore, John K. (eds.). China's Encounters on the South and Southwest: Reforging the Fiery Frontier Over Two Millennia. United States: Brill. pp. 78–106.
Taylor 1983, p. 21.
Épica medieval española (Cantar de los Siete Infantes de Lara). Madrid, Cátedra, 1991
Apollodorus, 1.9.28.

External links

Media related to Mythological objects at Wikimedia Commons

vte

Notable swords

Categories: Legendary objectsMythological objectsMythology-related lists

This page was last edited on 21 October 2025, at 10:09 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

[Log in](#)

[List of knowledge deities](#)

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

A statue of Athena, the Greek goddess of wisdom

A knowledge deity is a deity in mythology associated with knowledge, wisdom, or intelligence.

African mythology

Abena Motianim, Goddess of wisdom, knowledge and divination.[citation needed]

Anansi, an Akan folktale character associated with stories, wisdom, knowledge, and trickery, most commonly depicted as a spider

Ọrunmila (Yoruba: Ọ̀rúnmìlà, also Ọ̀rúnla^[1] or Orúla in Latin America) is the Orisha of Wisdom, knowledge, and Divination, is the creator of Ifá and Babalawo concept. He is a high priest of Ifá.

Ancient Egyptian mythology

Neith, goddess sometimes associated with wisdom

Thoth, originally a moon deity, later became the god of knowledge and wisdom and the scribe of the gods

Sia, the deification of wisdom

Isis, goddess of wisdom, magic and kingship. She was said to be "more clever than a million gods".

Seshat, goddess of wisdom, knowledge, and writing. Scribe of the gods. Credited with the invention of writing and the alphabet. Later demoted to consort of Thoth.[2]

Armenian mythology

Anahit, goddess of wisdom[3]

Tir, the god of written language, schooling, rhetoric, wisdom, and the arts[4]

Aztec mythology

Quetzalcoatl, god of the winds, art, culture, and wisdom, as well as the patron god of learning and knowledge.[5]

Maya mythology

Itzamna, creator god, associated with knowledge, wisdom, writing and culture, patron god of learning and books.[6]

Caribbean mythology

Papa Legba, loa of speech, communication, understanding, and guardian of crossroads[7]

Celtic mythology

Ogma, a figure from Irish and Scottish mythology, said to have invented the Ogham alphabet[8]

Ceridwen, a figure from Welsh mythology, said to be the keeper of the cauldron of knowledge, mother of transformation and the white lady of inspiration and death.

Chinese mythology

Wenchang Wang, the god of literature and scholarship

Kui Xing, God of examinations

Zhuyu Xingjun, God of examination successes [citation needed]

Guan Yu, God of military exams (General)

Lu Dongbin, God of daoist inner alchemy knowledge (scholar and poet)

Laozi, God of wisdom (philosopher)

Bao Zheng, Star of literature (politician)

Manjushri, the bodhisattva of wisdom[9][10]

Christian mythology

The Holy Spirit is the person of the Triune Godhead who is tasked with guiding humans towards knowledge of righteous action. The Spirit's duties includes pointing non-believers towards knowledge of the Christian faith, and the faithful towards knowledge of right and just action and lifestyle.[11]

Etruscan mythology

Menrva, goddess of wisdom, war, weaving, and medicine[12]

Greek mythology

Apollo, god of oracles, knowledge, civilization, music, healing, education, and youth

Athena, Olympian goddess of wisdom, civilization, weaving, and war strategy

Coeus, Titan of the inquisitive mind, his name meaning "query" or "questioning". He is the grandfather of Apollo.

Hermes, a god of cunning

Metis, the Titan associated most closely with wisdom and the mother of Athena, whose name in Ancient Greek described a combination of wisdom and cunning.[13][14]

Mnemosyne, Titan of memory, and one of the deities worshipped by the Cult of Asclepius in hopes that she would help supplicants remember visions[15]

Phoebe, a goddess of intellect[16]

Hindu mythology

A Saraswati statue in a park.

Saraswati, goddess of knowledge, creativity, and speech

Ganesha, god of wisdom, luck, and new beginnings

Kartikeya, god of war, victory, and knowledge

Brihaspati, guru of the devas

Shukra, guru of the asuras

Dakshinamurti, an aspect of Shiva as the guru of sages

Vidya Lakshmi, an aspect of Lakshmi as the bestower of knowledge

Hayagriva, an aspect of Vishnu as the god of knowledge

Gayatri, a form of Saraswati and the goddess of hymns

Savitri, a form of Saraswati and goddess of wisdom[17][18]

Hittite mythology

A'sa, god of wisdom

Kamrusepa[19][20]

Japanese mythology

Benzaiten, a Japanese form of Saraswati, goddess of everything that flows: water, words, speech, eloquence, music and by extension, knowledge.

Fukurokuju, god of wisdom and longevity

Kuebiko, scarecrow god of wisdom and agriculture

Omoikane, Shinto god of wisdom and intelligence

Tenjin, god of scholarship[21][22]

Middle Eastern mythology

Al-Kutbay, Nabataean god of knowledge and writing

Enki, Sumerian god of intelligence, crafts, mischief, water, and creation

Nabu, Babylonian god of wisdom and writing

Ninimma, a minor Mesopotamian goddess regarded as the scribe and scholar of Enlil

Nisaba, Sumerian goddess of writing, learning, and the harvest[23]

Muisca mythology

Bochica, messenger god of knowledge[24]

Neoplatonism

Nous, the cosmic embodiment of knowledge and intellect.

Lakota mythology

Hnašká, Lakota frog spirit of pezuota (sacred medicine)

Hunúŋpa, Lakota bear spirit of wóksape (Lakota concept of sacred knowledge), lesser spirit of knowledge

Iktómi, Lakota spider spirit of wóksape and trickery, greater knowledge spirit

Kssa, Oglala spirit of knowledge, sometimes considered Iktómi before being stripped of his title

Matǵó, Lakota mischievous healer spirit, taught the Lakota to fish

Ptesáŋwiŋ/White buffalo calf woman, Lakota prophetess, often conflated with Wohpe

Wiyóhiyanpa, Lakota wind spirit of the east, oversees new beginnings and knowledge

Whapiya/Wóhpe, Lakota spirit of knowledge, wishes, dreams, visions, prophecy and the wife of Okaga the south wind

Zuzéča, Lakota snake spirit of hidden knowledge and lies

Norse mythology

Wodan and Freya by Emil Doepler.

Mimir, god of wisdom

Gefjon, goddess associated with plowing, foreknowledge, and virginity.

Odin, god of wisdom who nevertheless relentlessly keeps searching for more knowledge; associated with the runes

Frigg, she is said to know the future, but never tells. The three following goddesses may be hypostases of her.

Sága, goddess of wisdom

Snotra, goddess associated with wisdom

Vör, goddess associated with wisdom[25]

Numerous minor characters in Norse mythology are said to be very wise, though there's often no instance of them demonstrating this supposed wisdom:

Dwarfs, particularly Alvis, whose name means "all-wise". Thor keeps him from marrying his daughter by challenging him to a wisdom contest that lasts all night. He's turned to stone by the rising sun.

Elfs possibly

Heimdallr

Kvasir

Tyr

Utgard-Loki, while not outright stated to be wise, he's notable for being the only giant to be cleverer than the gods and getting to escape with his life

Vafthrudnir, a wise jotunn Odin seeks out to challenge to a wisdom contest[26]

the Vanir in general[27]

Iranian mythology

Anahita, goddess of wisdom

Ahura Mazda, Zoroastrian god of light, benevolence, creation, truth, and perfect wisdom

Chista, goddess of wisdom and knowledge, she leads the mortals to the right way in life and the afterlife; she is also the goddess of religion in Zoroastrian mythology.[28]

Anahita Vessel, 300-500 AD, Sasanian, Iran, silver and gilt – Cleveland Museum of Art – DSC08130

Polynesian mythology

Anulap, god of magic and knowledge

Eijebong[29]

Roman mythology

Egeria, a water nymph who gives wisdom and prophecy in return for libations of water or milk at her sacred grove

Fabulinus, the God who teaches children to speak

Minerva, goddess of wisdom, strategy and crafts, the Roman equivalent of Athena

Providentia, goddess of forethought

Neptune, the god of the sea and freshwater, is said to have all the knowledge of water. [30]

Slavic mythology

Gamayun - symbol of knowledge and wisdom[citation needed]

Veles - Veles has been the most revered god in the Vedic pantheon of Slavic culture since ancient times. He is the patron saint of the interworld — both Light and Darkness are subject to him, he is also called Prophetic, Wise, because in the three worlds he manifests his power, he is the one who knows light and darkness, sets the energy of the world in motion, rotates the Universe, he is a permanent guardian on the border of the worlds, a spiritual mentor, he knows all the secrets of the universe.

Sumerian mythology

Geshtu-E, Minor god of intelligence who was sacrificed to bring forth humanity.

Turkic mythology

Mergen, deity of abundance and wisdom. Mergen symbolizes intelligence and thought. [31]

Vietnamese mythology

Nữ thần nghề mộc, the goddess who taught mankind how to create everyday utensils.
Văn Xương, god of exams, he holds the honor and career of those who follow the academic path.

Yoruban mythology

Orunmila

References

Bascom, William (1991). *Ifa Divination: Communication Between Gods and Men in West Africa*. Indiana University Press. p. ix. ISBN 9780253206381. Retrieved 1 April 2019. Orunmila is another name for Ifa, the deity

"Ancient Gods of Egypt". *discoverinegypt.com*.

"the-goddess-of-love-and-fertility-anahit". 21 August 2017.

Herouni, Paris (2004). *Armenians and Old Armenia*. Yerevan. pp. 8, 133. ISBN 9789994101016.

Smith 2003 p. 213

"Itzamná Mayan God - Spanish Academy Antigua".

Herskovits, Melville J. (1937). "African Gods and Catholic Saints in New World Negro Belief". *American Anthropologist*. 39 (4): 635–643. doi:10.1525/aa.1937.39.4.02a00080.

Jones, Mary. "The Ogham Tract". *Celtic Literature Collective*. Retrieved 21 October 2019.

民間信仰の神明概念 [Hierarchic organisation of the spiritual world]. *web.sgjh.tn.edu.tw*.

Hackin, J. (1932). *Asiatic Mythology: A Detailed Description and Explanation of the Mythologies of All the Great Nations of Asia*. Asian Educational Services.

Millard J. Erickson (1992). *Introducing Christian Doctrine*. Baker Book House. pp. 265–270.

de Grummond, *Etruscan Myth, Sacred History and Legend*

"Volume: Hellas, Article: Greek Mythology". *Encyclopaedia The Helios*. 1952.

Homer, *Iliad*, 8. An epic poem about the Battle of Troy. 366–369

Ahearne-Kroll, Stephen P. (April 2014). "Mnemosyne at the Asklepieia". *Classical Philology*. 109 (2): 99–118. doi:10.1086/675272. S2CID 162319084.

Albert, Liv (2021-03-30). *Greek Mythology: The Gods, Goddesses, and Heroes Handbook: From Aphrodite to Zeus, a Profile of Who's Who in Greek Mythology*. Simon and Schuster. ISBN 978-1-5072-1550-0.

Arthur Anthony Macdonell (1978). *Vedic Mythology*. Motilal Banarsidass (Reprint). ISBN 978-81-208-1113-3.

Yves Bonnefoy (1993). *Asian Mythologies*. University of Chicago Press. ISBN 978-0-226-06456-7.

J. G. Macqueen, "Hittian Mythology and Hittite Monarchy", *Anatolian Studies* (1959).

R. Lebrun, "Le zoomorphisme dans la religion hittite," *L'Animal, l'homme, le dieu dans le Proche-Orient ancien*, (Leuven) 1985:95-103, noted in Beckman 1989.

Chamberlain, Basil Hall (2008). *The Kojiki: Japanese Records of Ancient Matters*. Forgotten Books. ISBN 978-1-60506-938-8. Retrieved 9 February 2011.

Kelsey, W. Michael (1983). "Untitled", *Asian Folklore Studies* Vol 42

Bertman, Stephen (2005). *Handbook to Life in Ancient Mesopotamia* (Paperback ed.). Oxford: Oxford University Press. p. 122. ISBN 9780195183641. Retrieved 2016-08-08.

Hermann & Bullock, 1954

"The Children of Odin". gatewaytotheclassics.com.

Orchard (1997:170).

Du Chaillu, P. B. (1889).

"The Library of the world's myths and legends" (PDF). dl.lilibook.ir.

"Handbook of Polynesian Mythology". academia.edu.

"Roman Gods and Goddesses" (PDF). wetheredccn12.com.

"The Gods of Turks". milliyet.com.

vte

Lists of mythological figures

By geography

AfricanAlbanianArabianArmenianAustralian

AboriginalAztecBalkanBasqueBatakCanaaniteCatalanCeltic

ListChahtaChineseEfikEgyptian

IndexListElamiteEstonianEtruscanFinnishGeorgianGermanic Anglo-SaxonGreek

CreaturesDeitiesHomeric charactersMinor figuresMortalsMycenaean

deitiesOceanidsTrojan War

charactersGuancheHaudenosauneeHawaiianHebrideanIndian-origin religions Hindu

ListRigvedicBuddhist ChinaJapanJain ListMeitei

ListSylhetHittiteHungarianHurrianIndonesianInuitIrishJapaneseKassiteKomiKoreanLakot

aLithuanianMāoriMā'ohiMayaMesopotamianMicronesianMuskogeeMyanmarNative

American

ZapotecOssetianPersianPhilippinePurépechaRomanSamiSamoanSlavicTurkicTuvaluan

UgariticVainakhYoruba

By association

AgricultureArtBeautyChaosCreatorDawnDeathEarthFate and

TimeFertilityFireFortuneHealthHouseholdHuntingKing of the

godsKnowledgeLightLiminalLove and LustMoon

ListNationsNatureNightPsychopompRainResurrectionSkySmithingSun

ListThunderTreeTrickery ListTutelaryVegetationVolcanoWarWaterWeatherWind

Portal Category

Categories: Lists of deitiesKnowledge deitiesWisdom deities

This page was last edited on 7 October 2025, at 02:05 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;

additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and

Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,

a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)
[Create account](#)
[Log in](#)
[Lists of Greek mythological figures](#)

[Article](#)
[Talk](#)
[Read](#)
[Edit](#)
[View history](#)

[Tools](#)
From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia
Part of a series on
[Ancient Greek religion](#)
[Laurel wreath](#)
[Origins](#)
[Sacred places](#)
[Deities](#)
[Concepts](#)
[Practices](#)
[Philosophy](#)
[Philosophers](#)
[Texts](#)
[Other topics](#)
[icon Religion portal](#)
[Ancient Greece portal](#)
[vte](#)

This is an index of lists of mythological figures from ancient Greek religion and mythology.

[List of Greek deities](#)
[List of mortals in Greek mythology](#)
[List of Greek mythological creatures](#)
[List of minor Greek mythological figures](#)
[List of Trojan War characters](#)
[List of deified people in Greek mythology](#)
[List of Homeric characters](#)
[List of Oceanids](#)
[vte](#)

[Ancient Greece](#)
[Disambiguation icon](#)

This article includes a religion-related list of lists.

Categories: [Lists of religion lists](#)[Characters in Greek mythology](#)[Greek mythology-related lists](#)

This page was last edited on 3 December 2025, at 15:59 (UTC).
Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License;
additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and
Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc.,
a non-profit organization.
[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of
Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)
Wikimedia Foundation
Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)
[Create account](#)
[Log in](#)
[Lists of deities](#)

[Article](#)
[Talk](#)
[Read](#)
[Edit](#)
[View history](#)

[Tools](#)
[From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia](#)
[Mythology](#)
[Mythologies](#)
[Types](#)
[Lists](#)
[Related concepts](#)
[See also](#)
[vte](#)

This is an index of lists of deities of the different cultures, religions, and mythologies of the world.

[List of deities by classification](#)
[Lists of deities by cultural sphere](#)
[List of fictional deities](#)
[List of goddesses](#)
[List of people who have been considered deities](#)
[Names of God, names of deities of monotheistic religions](#)
[vte](#)
[Religion](#)
[Disambiguation icon](#)

This article includes a religion-related list of lists.

Categories: Lists of religion listsLists of deities

This page was last edited on 4 December 2025, at 21:40 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of

ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Lists of legendary creatures

Article

Talk

Read

View source

View history

Tools

Page semi-protected

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The following is a list of lists of legendary creatures, beings and entities from the folklore record. Entries consist of legendary and unique creatures, not of particularly unique individuals of a commonly known species.

Alphabetical lists

List of legendary creatures (A)

List of legendary creatures (B)

List of legendary creatures (C)

List of legendary creatures (D)

List of legendary creatures (E)

List of legendary creatures (F)

List of legendary creatures (G)

List of legendary creatures (H)

List of legendary creatures (I)

List of legendary creatures (J)

List of legendary creatures (K)
List of legendary creatures (L)
List of legendary creatures (M)
List of legendary creatures (N)
List of legendary creatures (O)
List of legendary creatures (P)
List of legendary creatures (Q)
List of legendary creatures (R)
List of legendary creatures (S)
List of legendary creatures (T)
List of legendary creatures (U)
List of legendary creatures (V)
List of legendary creatures (W)
List of legendary creatures (X)
List of legendary creatures (Y)
List of legendary creatures (Z)
Specific area-related lists
Category:Folklore by country
Category:Folklore by region
Portal:Religion
Category: Supernatural
Legendary creatures of the Argentine Northwest region
List of African mythological figures
List of creatures in Brazilian folklore
List of mythical creatures in Egyptian mythology
List of Chilote mythological creatures
List of creatures in Meitei folklore
List of Greek mythological creatures
Mythology of the Indigenous peoples of the Americas
List of legendary creatures from China
List of legendary creatures from France
List of legendary creatures from Japan
List of legendary creatures in Hindu mythology
List of named animals and plants in Germanic heroic legend
List of ghosts- Asian folklore
List of ghosts in Thai culture
List of Persian mythology
European folklore
Folklore of the Dominican Republic
Folklore of India
Folklore of Indonesia
List of Italian folklore
Folklore of Malaysia
Folklore of the Maldives
List of Nordic folklore

Punjabi folklore
Romani folklore
Folklore of Puerto Rico
Jewish folklore
Qatari folklore
List of Romanian folklore
List of Turkish folklore
Folklore of the United States
List of Philippine mythological creatures
List of spiritual entities in Islam
Folklore of the Low Countries
Mythical creatures in Burmese folklore
Supernatural beings in Slavic religion
Creature type-based lists
Main article: List of legendary creatures by type
See also

Wikimedia Commons has media related to legendary creatures.

Bestiary

Lists of fictional species

List of urban legends

vte

Lists of fictional life forms

vte

Urban legends

Disambiguation icon

This article includes a fiction-related list of lists.

Categories: Lists of fiction listsLists of legendary creaturesLists of fictional characters by type

This page was last edited on 5 November 2025, at 15:59 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

Donate

Create account

Log in

Lists of deities by cultural sphere

Article

Talk

Read

Edit

View history

Tools

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

This is an index to deities of the different religions, cultures and mythologies of the world, listed by region or culture.

Africa

Poster of a Mami Wata, "serpent priestess" painted ca. 1926 by German (Hamburg) artist Schleisinger, displayed in shrines as a popular image of Mami Wata in Africa and in the Diaspora.[1][2]

North Africa

Berber deities

Guanche deities

Egyptian deities

Osiris, lord of the dead. His green skin symbolizes rebirth

Sub-Saharan Africa

African deities

Alusi

Yoruba deities

Afro-American religion

Loa

Orisha

Americas

Central America

Aztec deities

Maya deities

North America

Inuit deities

Native (North and South) American deities

South America

Incan deities
Guarani deities
Mapuche deities
Muisca deities
Asia
Caucasus

Armenian deities
Georgian deities
Vainakh deities
Central Asia

Turkic deities
East Asia

Chinese deities
Taoist pure ones
Japanese deities
Korean deities
North Asia

Siberian deities
South Asia

The image illustrates the Hindu belief that each part of the cow embodies a particular deity

Buddhas
Buddhist Bodhisattvas
Buddhist deities
Hindu deities
Rigvedic deities (see also Proto-Indo-Iranian religion)
Sri Lankan Tamil local deities
Tamil Nadu local deities
Tirthankara
Southeast Asia

Indonesian deities
Manipuri deities
Ancestral deities of Manipur
King of Gods in Manipuri mythology
King of Serpent deities in Manipuri mythology
Philippine deities
West Asia

Anatolia
Hittite deities
Hurrian deities
Lydian deities
Middle East
Mesopotamian deities
Assyro-Babylonian pantheon (see also Family tree of the Babylonian gods)
Kassite deities
Sumerian deities
Ugaritic deities
Semitic deities
Canaanite deities
Elohim in Abrahamic religions
Pre-Islamic Arabian deities
Jinn
Nabataean deities
Persia
Yazata, see also Proto-Indo-Iranian religion
Elam
Europe
Baltic deities
Latvian deities
Lithuanian deities
Basque deities
Celtic deities
Irish deities
Etruscan deities
Finnic deities
Germanic deities
Anglo-Saxon deities
List of Norse gods and goddesses
Greek deities (see also Greek mythological figures, Twelve Olympians, Ancient Greek religion, Mycenaean deities)
Neoplatonic triad
Hungarian deities
Lusitani deities
Paleo-Balkan deities (Dacian/Illyrian/Thracian)
List of Roman deities
Sami deities
Slavic deities
Thelemic deities
Oceania
Australian Aboriginal deities
Polynesian deities
Hawaiian deities

[Māori deities of New Zealand](#)

[Rapa Nui deities of Easter Island](#)

[References](#)

[Jell-Bahlsen 1997, p. 105](#)

[Chesi 1997, p. 255\)](#)

[vte](#)

[Lists of mythological figures](#)

[By geography](#)

[African](#)[Albanian](#)[Arabian](#)[Armenian](#)[Australian](#)

[Aboriginal](#)[Aztec](#)[Balkan](#)[Basque](#)[Batak](#)[Canaanite](#)[Catalan](#)[Celtic](#)

[List](#)[Chahta](#)[Chinese](#)[Efik](#)[Egyptian](#)

[Index](#)[List](#)[Elamite](#)[Estonian](#)[Etruscan](#)[Finnish](#)[Georgian](#)[Germanic](#) [Anglo-Saxon](#)[Greek](#)

[Creatures](#)[Deities](#)[Homeric characters](#)[Minor figures](#)[Mortals](#)[Mycenaean](#)

[deities](#)[Oceanids](#)[Trojan War](#)

[characters](#)[Guanche](#)[Haudenosaunee](#)[Hawaiian](#)[Hebridean](#)[Indian-origin religions](#) [Hindu](#)

[List](#)[Rigvedic](#)[Buddhist China](#)[Japan](#)[Jain List](#)[Meitei](#)

[List](#)[Sylhet](#)[Hittite](#)[Hungarian](#)[Hurrian](#)[Indonesian](#)[Inuit](#)[Irish](#)[Japanese](#)[Kassite](#)[Komi](#)[Korean](#)[Lakot](#)

[a](#)[Lithuanian](#)[Māori](#)[Mā'ohi](#)[Maya](#)[Mesopotamian](#)[Micronesia](#)[Muskogean](#)[Myanmar](#)[Native](#)

[American](#)

[Zapotec](#)[Ossetian](#)[Persian](#)[Philippine](#)[Purépecha](#)[Roman](#)[Sami](#)[Samoan](#)[Slavic](#)[Turkic](#)[Tuvaluan](#)

[Ugaritic](#)[Vainakh](#)[Yoruba](#)

[By association](#)

[Agriculture](#)[Art](#)[Beauty](#)[Chaos](#)[Creator](#)[Dawn](#)[Death](#)[Earth](#)[Fate and](#)

[Time](#)[Fertility](#)[Fire](#)[Fortune](#)[Health](#)[Household](#)[Hunting](#)[King of the](#)

[gods](#)[Knowledge](#)[Light](#)[Liminal](#)[Love and Lust](#)[Moon](#)

[List](#)[Nations](#)[Nature](#)[Night](#)[Psychopomp](#)[Rain](#)[Resurrection](#)[Sky](#)[Smithing](#)[Sun](#)

[List](#)[Thunder](#)[Tree](#)[Trickery List](#)[Tutelary](#)[Vegetation](#)[Volcano](#)[War](#)[Water](#)[Weather](#)[Wind](#)

[Portal Category](#)

[Disambiguation icon](#)

This article includes a religion-related list of lists.

Categories: [Lists of religion lists](#)[Lists of deities](#)

This page was last edited on 30 April 2025, at 07:48 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

[Privacy policy](#)[About Wikipedia](#)[Disclaimers](#)[Contact Wikipedia](#)[Code of](#)

[Conduct](#)[Developers](#)[Statistics](#)[Cookie statement](#)[Mobile view](#)

[Wikimedia Foundation](#)

[Powered by MediaWiki](#)

[Skip to main content](#)[Accessibility help](#)

[Accessibility feedback](#)

[Seasonal Holidays 2025](#)

[Diderot](#)

AI Mode

All

Images

Shopping

Videos

Short videos

News

More

Tools

Denis Diderot

French philosopher and art critic

Overview

Books

circa 1765: Portrait of the French writer and scholar, Denis Diderot (1713 - 1784).

(Photo by Hulton Archive/Getty Images)

Hulton Archive/Getty ImagesPortrait of the French writer and scholar, Denis Diderot (1713 - 1784).

Denis Diderot - Wikipedia

Denis Diderot

0:57

YouTube • Ali Abdaal

The Diderot Effect #shorts

Have you ever struggled with the Diderot Effect? Check out my weekly podcast, Deep Dive - <https://www.youtube.com/c/DeepDivewithAliAbdaal/> ...

Nov 25, 2022

Born

Oct 5, 1713

Langres, France

Died

Jul 31, 1784

Paris, France

The American Revolution Institute

The Diderot Encyclopédie - The American Revolution Institute

The Encyclopédie provides insight into the intellectual discourse on the theory and practice of warfare in the era of the American Revolution.

People also ask

What is Denis Diderot best known for?

What is the Diderot theory?

What is Denis Diderot's most famous quote?

What were the main ideas of Diderot?

Feedback

Denis Diderot

Wikipedia

[https://en.wikipedia.org › wiki › Denis_Diderot](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Denis_Diderot)

a French philosopher, art critic, and writer, best known for serving as co-founder, chief editor, and contributor to the Encyclopédie along with Jean le Rond d ...

Encyclopédie

Anne-Antoinette Diderot

Jean le Rond d'Alembert

Books

Memoirs of a Nun

1792

Jacques the Fatalist

1785

Rameau's Nephew

1805

Supplément au voyage de Bougainville

1796

Paradox of the Actor

1830

Letter on the Blind

1749

The Indiscreet Jewels

1748

Salons

d'Alembert's Dream

1830

See more

Denis Diderot | Biography, Philosophy, Works, Beliefs ...

Britannica

[https://www.britannica.com › ... › Novelists A-K](https://www.britannica.com/.../Novelists-A-K)

Nov 20, 2025 — French man of letters and philosopher who, from 1745 to 1772, served as chief editor of the Encyclopédie, one of the principal works of the Age of ...

Denis Diderot - Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy

<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/diderot>

by CT Wolfe · 2019 · Cited by 12 — Diderot invented a new form of materialism, drawing on a variety of sources including the Epicurean tradition, Hobbes and Locke, Spinoza and ...

What people are saying

/ Denis Diderot / . "Power acquired by violence is only a usurpation, and lasts only as long as the force of him who commands prevails over that of those who obey." . "Denis Diderot was a French philosopher, art critic, and writer, best known for serving as co-fo
980+ reactions · 2 weeks ago

petersbelownabove

Facebook

TIL about "The Indiscreet Jewels", a French novel published in 1748 about a magical ring that makes vaginas talk, literally. Its author, Denis Diderot, is one of the most prominent figures of the Age of Enlightenment.

Popular comment · He probably took inspiration from a 14th century fabliau (short narrative in verse) titled "About a knight that made cunts speak". Excerpt: "Sire, have no worries! Have you forgotten the gift of the youngest? If the cunt cannot speak, it's the arse! —By my head, blessed be you! Huet, you speak truly!" said the knight, laughing, who immediately called the arse loudly, begged it, implored it, and urged it to reveal the reason for the cunt's obstinate silence. "It is impossible for him to speak," said the arse in a very audible voice, because the cunt's mouth is full, of cotton, linen, or wool, which my lady stuffed into it just now when she went to her room. If it is removed, it will be able to move its lips, and I know very well that it will speak!"

.

60+ comments · 2 days ago

r/todayilearned

Reddit

The Diderot Effect: When New Things Can (Accidentally) Make Us Unhappy

2 likes · 3 days ago

Unwritten Business Guide

Substack

Another French museum was robbed — just hours after the theft at the Louvre. This time, the target was the Denis Diderot House of Enlightenment in Langres. Thieves made off with a "treasure" — a unique collection of nearly 2,000 coins: 1,633 silver and 319 gold, minted between 1790 and 1840, with an estimated value of around €90,000. In an official statement, the city administration strongly condemned the act of vandalism and theft, calling it an attack on the shared cultural heritage. But maybe it's time to start

talking about a systemic security failure?
620+ likes · 1 month ago

nexta_tv · X
Belarusian media outlet

#OTD 5 October 1713 Denis Diderot was born. He became one of the most famous philosophers of the Enlightenment, best known for serving as co-founder, chief editor, and contributor to the Encyclopédie along with Jean le Rond d'Alembert. His works criticiz
120+ reactions · Oct 5, 2025

TheFrenchHistoryPodcast · Facebook
French history podcast

Denis Diderot (October 5, 1713 ~ July 31, 1784)
1.2K+ reactions · Oct 5, 2025

anxfreedom
Facebook

"The philosopher has never killed any priests, whereas the priest has killed a great many philosophers." Denis Diderot
3 weeks ago

Pergament_F
X

Another French museum robbed: the Denis Diderot House in Langres On the morning of October 20, staff arriving at the Denis Diderot House museum in Langres, northwestern France, discovered a broken entrance door and a shattered glass display case containing gold and silver coins. Thieves stole part of the coin collection, which includes 1,633 silver coins and 319 gold coins minted between 1790 and 1840, discovered during the 2011 restoration of the museum building. Other museum exhibits were reportedly untouched.
1.7K+ likes · 1 month ago

visegrad24 · X
News website
In what's starting to look like a wave rather than a coincidence, thieves have struck

again in France—this time at the House of Enlightenment, Denis Diderot, in Landres. Nearly 2,000 gold and silver coins were taken during a nighttime break-in, just hours after the Louvre's audacious daylight robbery. Read more: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/news/french-museum-heists-continue-the-house-of-enlightenment-denis-diderot-1234758386/>

10+ likes · 1 month ago

artnews · Threads

Art news organization

Another French museum robbed: the Denis Diderot House in Langres!!! On the morning of October 20, staff arriving at the Denis Diderot House museum in Langres, northwestern France, discovered a broken entrance door and a shattered glass display ca

60+ reactions · 1 month ago

TheArchaeologistOfficial · Facebook

Hellenic civilization commentator

France, what's going on? While the world was transfixed by the Louvre heist, ANOTHER museum was robbed. Yes, you read that right — the latest victim is the Denis Diderot House of Enlightenment Museum. Thieves made off with 2,000 gold and silver coins, many unearthed during a 2011 renovation. These coins date back to the 18th and 19th centuries. The break-in happened overnight from Sunday to Monday, just hours after the Louvre theft. They forced open the entrance and smashed display cases. Clouseau is investigating. Naturally.

270+ likes · 1 month ago

xmuse_

X

Another French museum hit! On October 20, thieves struck the Denis Diderot House in Langres, stealing part of its 18th-century coin collection—1,633 silver & 319 gold coins. Only hours after the Louvre heist.

370+ likes · 1 month ago

Osint613 · X

Middle East & global events monitoring

Denis Diderot Archive

Marxists Internet Archive

<https://www.marxists.org> › reference › archive › diderot

Denis Diderot Archive, 1713-1784, Brief Biography, Conversation between D'Alembert and Diderot, From Oeuvres Complètes, Letter to My Brother, 1760.
Short videos

0:57

The Diderot Effect #shorts

YouTube · Ali Abdaal

0:15

Denis Diderot "Denis Diderot was a French philosopher, art ...

Facebook · Humanity & love

0:58

What is the Diderot Effect?

YouTube · Peter Cook

0:39

What Made Denis Diderot's ENCYCLOPEDIA So ...

YouTube · Mr. Louis | Today in History

0:42

The Diderot Effect

YouTube · Mia Danielle

0:50

Denis Diderot #philosophers #history #ancientphilosophy

YouTube · Bitesize Philosophy

0:56

Denis Diderot – The mind behind the first Encyclopedia ...

YouTube · Relax History AI

0:09

Denis Diderot and the Creation of the Encyclopédie

YouTube · Historical

More short videos

Videos

The Diderot Effect #shorts
YouTube · Ali Abdaal
Nov 25, 2022
YouTube · Ali Abdaal

0:57
The Diderot Effect: When a new purchase leads to a desire for more, leading to a cycle of consumption.
Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely | Andrew Curran | Talks ...
YouTube · Talks at Google
Sep 5, 2019
YouTube · Talks at Google

43:52
Diderot, a 18th-century French philosopher, is known for his radical ideas and contributions to the Encyclopedia. He was an atheist, skeptic, and a passionate advocate for freedom of thought.
What is the Diderot Effect?
YouTube · Peter Cook
Jul 16, 2023
YouTube · Peter Cook

0:58
It's this idea that obtaining a new position will often create a spiral of consumption.
Feedback
View all
ARTFL Diderot Collection

ARTFL Project
<https://artfl-project.uchicago.edu> › diderot
Denis Diderot was a pivotal figure of the Enlightenment, best known for his role as co-founder and chief editor of the Encyclopédie, a monumental work aimed at ...
Denis Diderot

Humanists UK
<https://humanists.uk> › humanism › enlightenment › den...
Philosopher and writer of the French Enlightenment Denis Diderot was born to a family noted for their church connections but became an atheist later in life.
The Diderot Encyclopédie

The American Revolution Institute
<https://www.americanrevolutioninstitute.org> › diderot-e...
The Encyclopédie provides insight into the intellectual discourse on the theory and practice of warfare in the era of the American Revolution.
DENIS DIDEROT

University of Kent

<https://www.kent.ac.uk> › [ewto](#) › [projects](#) › [anthology](#)

Diderot (1713-1784) was a French writer, philosopher and art critic, who with Voltaire to a great extent shaped the French Enlightenment during the greater ...

People also search for

Diderot: books

Diderot Effect

Diderot jung

Denis Diderot pronunciation

Diderot meaning

Diderot religion

Denis Diderot quotes

Diderot and Voltaire

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Overview

Denis Diderot was a French philosopher, art critic, and writer, best known for serving as co-founder, chief editor, and contributor to the Encyclopédie along with Jean le Rond d'Alembert. He was a prominent figure during the Age of Enlightenment. Wikipedia

Born: October 5, 1713, Langres, France

Died: July 31, 1784 (age 70 years), Paris, France

Influenced by: Voltaire, John Locke, René Descartes · [See more](#)

Influenced: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, Milan Kundera,

André Breton, Günter Grass

Children: Angelique Diderot

Spouse: Anne-Antoinette Champion (m. 1743–1784)

Feedback

People also search for

Jean Le Rond d'Alembert

Voltaire

Jean-Jacques Rousseau

Montesquieu

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

Denis Diderot

Article

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[View source](#)

[View history](#)

Tools

Page semi-protected

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Diderot" redirects here. For the lunar impact crater, see Diderot (crater).

Denis Diderot

Portrait of Denis Diderot by Louis-Michel van Loo, 1767

Born 5 October 1713

Langres, Champagne, France

Died 31 July 1784 (aged 70)

Paris, France

Spouse Antoinette Champion (m. 1743)

Children 4

Education

Alma mater University of Paris

Philosophical work

Era 18th-century philosophy

Region Western philosophy

School

Encyclopédistes

French materialism

Main interests Science, literature, philosophy, art[1]:650

Signature

Denis Diderot (/ˈdiːdərou/;^[2] French: [dəni did(ə)ʁo]; 5 October 1713 – 31 July 1784) was a French philosopher, art critic, and writer, best known for serving as co-founder, chief editor, and contributor to the *Encyclopédie* along with Jean le Rond d'Alembert. He was a prominent figure during the Age of Enlightenment.^[3]

Diderot initially studied philosophy at a Jesuit college, then considered working in the church clergy before briefly studying law. When he decided to become a writer in 1734, his father disowned him. He lived a bohemian existence for the next decade. In the 1740s he wrote many of his best-known works in both fiction and non-fiction, including the 1748 novel *Les Bijoux indiscrets* (*The Indiscreet Jewels*).

In 1751 Diderot co-created the *Encyclopédie* with Jean le Rond d'Alembert. It was the first encyclopedia to include contributions from many named contributors and the first to describe the mechanical arts. Its secular tone, which included articles skeptical about Biblical miracles, angered both religious and government authorities; in 1758 it was banned by the Catholic Church and, in 1759, the French government banned it as well, although this ban was not strictly enforced. Many of the initial contributors to the *Encyclopédie* left the project as a result of its controversies and some were even jailed. D'Alembert left in 1759, making Diderot the sole editor. Diderot also became the main contributor, writing around 7,000 articles. He continued working on the project until 1765. He was increasingly despondent about the *Encyclopédie* by the end of his involvement in it and felt that the entire project might have been a waste. Nevertheless, the *Encyclopédie* is considered one of the forerunners of the French Revolution.

Diderot struggled financially throughout most of his career and received very little official recognition of his merit, including being passed over for membership in the *Académie Française*. His fortunes improved significantly in 1766, when Russian Empress Catherine the Great, who had heard of his financial troubles, bought his 3,000-volume personal library, amassed during his work on the *Encyclopédie*, for 15,000 livres, and offered him in addition a thousand more livres per year to serve as its custodian while he lived.^[4] He received 50 years' "salary" up front from her, and stayed five months at her court in Saint Petersburg in 1773 and 1774, sharing discussions and writing essays on various topics for her several times a week.^{[5][6]}

Diderot's literary reputation during his life rested primarily on his plays and his contributions to the *Encyclopédie*; many of his most important works, including *Jacques the Fatalist*, *Rameau's Nephew*, *Paradox of the Actor*, and *D'Alembert's Dream*, were published only after his death.^{[7][1]:678–679[8]}

Early life

N° 9 de la place dans le centre ville de Langres: in the background on the right side is Diderot's birthplace

Statue of Denis Diderot in the city of Langres, his birthplace

Denis Diderot was born in Langres, Champagne. His parents were Didier Diderot, a cutler, maître coutelier, and Angélique Vigneron. Of Denis' five siblings, three survived to adulthood: Denise Diderot, their youngest brother Pierre-Didier Diderot and, their sister Angélique Diderot. Denis Diderot greatly admired his sister Denise, sometimes referring to her as "a female Socrates".[9]

Diderot began his formal education at a Jesuit college in Langres. In 1732 he received the degree of Master of Arts from the University of Paris. He abandoned the idea of entering the clergy in 1735[10] and, instead, decided to study at the Paris Law Faculty. His study of law was short-lived, however, and in the early 1740s he decided to become a writer and translator.[10] Because of his refusal to enter one of the learned professions, he was disowned by his father and, for the next ten years, he lived a bohemian existence.[5]

In 1742 he formed a friendship with Jean-Jacques Rousseau, whom he met while watching games of chess and drinking coffee at the Café de la Régence.[10] In October 1743, he further alienated his father by marrying Antoinette Champion (1710–1796), a devout Catholic.[10] Diderot senior considered the match inappropriate, given Champion's low social standing, poor education, fatherless status, and lack of a dowry. She was about three years older than Diderot. She bore Diderot one surviving child, a girl,[11] named Angélique, after both Diderot's dead mother and his sister. The death in 1749 of his sister Angélique, a nun, in her convent, may have affected Diderot's opinion of religion. She is assumed to have been the inspiration for his novel about a nun, *La Religieuse*, in which he depicts a woman who is forced to enter a convent, where she suffers at the hands of her fellow nuns.[5][12]

Diderot was unfaithful to his wife, and had affairs with Anne-Gabrielle Babuty (who would marry and later divorce the artist Jean-Baptiste Greuze), Madeleine de Puisieux, Sophie Volland, and Mme de Maux (Jeanne-Catherine de Maux), to whom he wrote numerous surviving letters and who eventually left him for a younger man.[1]:675–676 Diderot's letters to Sophie Volland are known for their candor and are regarded to be "among the literary treasures of the eighteenth century".[1]:675

Early works

Diderot's earliest works included a translation of Temple Stanyan's *History of Greece* (1743). In 1745, he published a translation of Shaftesbury's *Inquiry Concerning Virtue and Merit*, to which he had added his own "reflections".[1]:625 With two colleagues, François-Vincent Toussaint and Marc-Antoine Eidous, he produced a translation of Robert James's *Medicinal Dictionary* (1746–1748).[13]

Philosophical Thoughts

Main article: *Philosophical Thoughts*

In 1746, Diderot wrote his first original work: the *Philosophical Thoughts* (*Pensées philosophiques*).[14][15] In this book, Diderot argued for a reconciliation of reason with

feeling so as to establish harmony. According to Diderot, without feeling there is a detrimental effect on virtue, and no possibility of creating sublime work. However, since feeling without discipline can be destructive, reason is necessary to control feeling.[1]: 625

At the time Diderot wrote this book he was a deist. Hence there is a defense of deism in this book, and some arguments against atheism.[1]:625 The book also contains criticism of Christianity.[1]:626

The Skeptic's Walk

Main article: The Skeptic's Walk

In 1747, Diderot wrote *The Skeptic's Walk* (*Promenade du sceptique*)[16] in which a deist, an atheist, and a pantheist have a dialogue on the nature of divinity. The deist gives the argument from design. The atheist says that the universe is better explained by physics, chemistry, matter, and motion. The pantheist says that the cosmic unity of mind and matter, which are co-eternal and comprise the universe, is God. This work remained unpublished until 1830. Accounts differ as to why. It was either because the local police, warned by the priests of another attack on Christianity, seized the manuscript, or because the authorities forced Diderot to give an undertaking that he would not publish this work.[1]:626

The Indiscreet Jewels

Main article: The Indiscreet Jewels

In 1748, Diderot needed to raise money on short notice. His wife had borne him a child, and his mistress Madeleine de Puisieux was making financial demands of him. According to his Daughter's (uncorroborated) *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire de la vie et des ouvrages de Diderot*, at this time, Diderot told his mistress that writing a novel was a trivial task, whereupon she challenged him to write one, and so Diderot produced *The Indiscreet Jewels* (*Les bijoux indiscrets*).[17]

The book about the magical ring of a Sultan that induces any woman's "discreet jewels"[18][note 1] to confess their sexual experiences when the ring is pointed at them. [1]:626–627 In all, the ring is pointed at thirty different women in the book—usually at a dinner or a social meeting—with the Sultan typically being visible to the woman.[19][1]: 627 However, since the ring has the additional property of making its owner invisible when required, a few of the sexual experiences recounted are through direct observation with the Sultan making himself invisible and placing his person in the unsuspecting woman's boudoir.[19]

Besides the bawdiness, there are several digressions into philosophy, music, and literature in the book. In one such philosophical digression, the Sultan has a dream in which he sees a child named "Experiment" growing bigger and stronger till the child demolishes an ancient temple named "Hypothesis". The book proved to be lucrative for Diderot even though it could only be sold clandestinely. It is Diderot's most published work.[1]:627

The book is believed to draw upon the 1742 libertine novel *Le Sopha* by Claude Prosper Jolyot de Cr billon (Cr billon fils).[1]:627

Scientific work

Diderot kept writing on science in a desultory way all his life. The scientific work of which he was most proud was *Memoires sur differents sujets de mathematique* (1748). This work contains original ideas on acoustics, tension, air resistance, and "a project for a new organ" that could be played by all. Some of Diderot's scientific works were applauded by contemporary publications of his time such as *The Gentleman's Magazine*, the *Journal des savants*; and the Jesuit publication *Journal de Trevoux*, which invited more such work: "on the part of a man as clever and able as M. Diderot seems to be, of whom we should also observe that his style is as elegant, trenchant, and unaffected as it is lively and ingenious." [1]:627

On the unity of nature Diderot wrote, "Without the idea of the whole, philosophy is no more," and, "Everything changes; everything passes; nothing remains but the whole." He wrote of the temporal nature of molecules, and rejected *embo tement*, the view that organisms are pre-formed in an infinite regression of non-changing germs. He saw minerals and species as part of a spectrum, and he was fascinated with hermaphroditism. His answer to the universal attraction in corpuscular physics models was universal elasticity. His view of nature's flexibility foreshadows the discovery of evolution, but it is not Darwinistic in a strict sense.[20]

Letter on the Blind

Diderot's celebrated *Letter on the Blind* (*Lettre sur les aveugles   l'usage de ceux qui voient*) (1749) introduced him to the world as an original thinker.[21] The subject is a discussion of the relation between reasoning and the knowledge acquired through perception (the five senses). The title of his book also evoked some ironic doubt about who exactly were "the blind" under discussion. In the essay, blind English mathematician Nicholas Saunderson[22] argues that, since knowledge derives from the senses, mathematics is the only form of knowledge that both he and a sighted person can agree on. It is suggested that the blind could be taught to read through their sense of touch. (A later essay, *Lettre sur les sourds et muets*, considered the case of a similar deprivation in the deaf and mute.) According to Jonathan Israel, what makes the *Lettre sur les aveugles* so remarkable, however, is its distinct, if undeveloped, presentation of the theory of variation and natural selection.[23]

This powerful essay, for which La Mettrie expressed warm appreciation in 1751, revolves around a remarkable deathbed scene in which a dying blind philosopher, Saunderson, rejects the arguments of a deist clergyman who endeavours to win him around to a belief in a providential God during his last hours. Saunderson's arguments are those of a neo-Spinozist Naturalist and fatalist, using a sophisticated notion of the self-generation and natural evolution of species without creation or supernatural intervention. The notion of "thinking matter" is upheld and the "argument from design"

discarded (following La Mettrie) as hollow and unconvincing. The work appeared anonymously in Paris in June 1749, and was vigorously suppressed by the authorities. Diderot, who had been under police surveillance since 1747, was swiftly identified as the author, had his manuscripts confiscated, and he was imprisoned for some months, under a *lettre de cachet*, on the outskirts of Paris, in the dungeons at Vincennes where he was visited almost daily by Rousseau, at the time his closest and most assiduous ally.[24]

Voltaire wrote an enthusiastic letter to Diderot commending the *Lettre* and stating that he had held Diderot in high regard for a long time, to which Diderot sent a warm response. Soon after this, Diderot was arrested.[1]:629–630

Science historian Conway Zirkle has written that Diderot was an early evolutionary thinker and noted that his passage that described natural selection was "so clear and accurate that it almost seems that we would be forced to accept his conclusions as a logical necessity even in the absence of the evidence collected since his time." [25]

Incarceration and release

Angered by public resentment over the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, the government started incarcerating many of its critics. It was decided at this time to rein in Diderot. On 23 July 1749, the governor of the Vincennes fortress instructed the police to incarcerate Diderot, and the next day he was arrested and placed in solitary confinement at Vincennes. It was at this period that Rousseau visited Diderot in prison and came out a changed man, with newfound ideas about the disadvantages of knowledge, civilization, and Enlightenment – the so-called illumination de Vincennes.[26]

Diderot had been permitted to retain one book that he had in his possession at the time of his arrest, *Paradise Lost*, which he read during his incarceration. He wrote notes and annotations on the book, using a toothpick as a pen, and ink that he made by scraping slate from the walls and mixing it with wine.[1]:630

In August 1749, Mme du Chatelet, presumably at Voltaire's behest, wrote to the governor of Vincennes, who was her relative, pleading for Diderot to be lodged more comfortably during his incarceration. The governor then offered Diderot access to the great halls of the Vincennes castle and the freedom to receive books and visitors providing he wrote a document of submission.[1]:630 On 13 August 1749, Diderot wrote to the governor:

I admit to you ... that the *Pensées*, the *Bijoux*, and the *Lettre sur les aveugles* are debaucheries of the mind that escaped from me; but I can ... promise you on my honor (and I do have honor) that they will be the last, and that they are the only ones ... As for those who have taken part in the publication of these works, nothing will be hidden from you. I shall depose verbally, in the depths [secrecy] of your heart, the names both of the publishers and the printers.[27]

On 20 August, Diderot was moved to a comfortable room in the fortress and allowed to meet visitors and walk within the gardens. On 23 August, Diderot signed another letter promising never to leave the prison without permission.[1]:631 On 3 November 1749, he was given his freedom.[1]:632 Subsequently, in 1750, he released the prospectus for the *Encyclopédie*. [1]:633

Encyclopédie

Main article: *Encyclopédie*

Genesis

Title page of the *Encyclopédie*

André le Breton, a bookseller and printer, approached Diderot with a project for the publication of a translation of Ephraim Chambers' *Cyclopaedia*, or *Universal Dictionary of Arts and Sciences* into French, first undertaken by the Englishman John Mills, and followed by the German Gottfried Sellius.[4] Diderot accepted the proposal, and transformed it. He persuaded Le Breton to publish a new work, which would consolidate ideas and knowledge from the Republic of Letters. The publishers found capital for a larger enterprise than they had first planned. Jean le Rond d'Alembert was persuaded to become Diderot's colleague, and permission was procured from the government.

In 1750, an elaborate prospectus announced the project, and the first volume was published in 1751.[4] This work was unorthodox and advanced for the time. Diderot stated that "An encyclopedia ought to make good the failure to execute such a project hitherto, and should encompass not only the fields already covered by the academies, but each and every branch of human knowledge." Comprehensive knowledge will give "the power to change men's common way of thinking." [28] The work combined scholarship with information on trades. Diderot emphasized the abundance of knowledge within each subject area. Everyone would benefit from these insights.

Controversies

Diderot's work, however, was mired in controversy from the beginning; the project was suspended by the courts in 1752. Just as the second volume was completed, accusations arose regarding seditious content, concerning the editor's entries on religion and natural law. Diderot was detained and his house was searched for manuscripts for subsequent articles: but the search proved fruitless as no manuscripts could be found. They had been hidden in the house of an unlikely confederate—Chretien de Lamoignon Malesherbes, who originally ordered the search. Although Malesherbes was a staunch absolutist, and loyal to the monarchy—he was sympathetic to the literary project.[29] Along with his support, and that of other well-placed influential confederates, the project resumed. Diderot returned to his efforts only to be constantly embroiled in controversy.

These twenty years were to Diderot not merely a time of incessant drudgery, but harassing persecution and desertion of friends. The ecclesiastical party detested the *Encyclopédie*, in which they saw a rising stronghold for their philosophic enemies. By

1757, they could endure it no longer—the subscribers had grown from 2,000 to 4,000, a measure of the growth of the work in popular influence and power.[4] Diderot wanted the Encyclopédie to give all the knowledge of the world to the people of France. However, the Encyclopédie threatened the governing social classes of France (aristocracy) because it took for granted the justice of religious tolerance, freedom of thought, and the value of science and industry.[30] It asserted the doctrine that the main concern of the nation's government ought to be the nation's common people. It was believed that the Encyclopédie was the work of an organized band of conspirators against society, and that the dangerous ideas they held were made truly formidable by their open publication. In 1759, the Encyclopédie was formally suppressed.[4] The decree did not stop the work, which went on, but its difficulties increased by the necessity of being clandestine. Jean le Rond d'Alembert withdrew from the enterprise and other powerful colleagues, including Anne Robert Jacques Turgot, Baron de Laune, declined to contribute further to a book that had acquired a bad reputation.[21]

Diderot's contribution

Diderot was left to finish the task as best he could. He wrote approximately 7,000 articles,[31] some very slight, but many of them laborious, comprehensive, and long. He damaged his eyesight correcting proofs and editing the manuscripts of less scrupulous contributors. He spent his days at workshops, mastering manufacturing processes, and his nights writing what he had learned during the day. He was incessantly harassed by threats of police raids. The last copies of the first volume were issued in 1765.

In 1764, when his immense work was drawing to an end, he encountered a crowning mortification: he discovered that the bookseller, Le Breton, fearing the government's displeasure, had struck out from the proof sheets, after they had left Diderot's hands, all passages that he considered too dangerous. "He and his printing-house overseer", writes Furbank, "had worked in complete secrecy, and had moreover deliberately destroyed the author's original manuscript so that the damage could not be repaired." [32] The monument to which Diderot had given the labor of twenty long and oppressive years was irreparably mutilated and defaced.[4] It was 12 years, in 1772, before the subscribers received the final 28 folio volumes of the Encyclopédie, ou dictionnaire raisonné des sciences, des arts et des métiers since the first volume had been published.[clarification needed]

When Diderot's work on the Encyclopédie project came to an end in 1765, he expressed concerns to his friends that the twenty-five years he had spent on the project had been wasted.[10]

Mature works

Although the Encyclopédie was Diderot's most monumental product, he was the author of many other works that sowed nearly every intellectual field with new and creative ideas.[4] Diderot's writing ranges from a graceful trifle like the *Regrets sur ma vieille robe de chambre* (Regrets for my Old Dressing Gown) up to the heady *D'Alembert's Dream* (*Le Rêve de d'Alembert*) (composed 1769), a philosophical dialogue in which he

plunges into the depths of the controversy as to the ultimate constitution of matter and the meaning of life.[4] Jacques le fataliste (written between 1765 and 1780, but not published until 1792 in German and 1796 in French) is similar to Tristram Shandy and The Sentimental Journey in its challenge to the conventional novel's structure and content.[33]

La Religieuse (The Nun or Memoirs of a Nun)

La Religieuse was a novel that claimed to show the corruption of the Catholic Church's institutions.

Plot

The novel began not as a work for literary consumption, but as an elaborate practical joke aimed at luring the Marquis de Croismare, a companion of Diderot's, back to Paris. The Nun is set in the 18th century, that is, contemporary France. Suzanne Simonin is an intelligent and sensitive sixteen-year-old French girl who is forced against her will into a Catholic convent by her parents. Suzanne's parents initially inform her that she is being sent to the convent for financial reasons. However, while in the convent, she learns that she is actually there because she is an illegitimate child, as her mother committed adultery. By sending Suzanne to the convent, her mother thought she could make amends for her sins by using her daughter as a sacrificial offering.

At the convent, Suzanne suffers humiliation, harassment and violence because she refuses to make the vows of the religious community. She eventually finds companionship with the Mother Superior, Sister de Moni, who pities Suzanne's anguish. After Sister de Moni's death, the new Mother Superior, Sister Sainte-Christine, does not share the same empathy for Suzanne that her predecessor had, blaming Suzanne for the death of Sister de Moni. Suzanne is physically and mentally harassed by Sister Sainte-Christine, almost to the point of death.

Suzanne contacts her lawyer, Monsieur Manouri, who attempts to legally free her from her vows. Manouri manages to have Suzanne transferred to another convent, Sainte-Eutrope. At the new convent, the Mother Superior is revealed to be a lesbian, and she grows affectionate towards Suzanne. The Mother Superior attempts to seduce Suzanne, but her innocence and chastity eventually drives the Mother Superior to insanity, leading to her death.

Suzanne escapes the Sainte-Eutrope convent using the help of a priest. Following her liberation, she lives in fear of being captured and taken back to the convent as she awaits the help from Diderot's friend the Marquis de Croismare.

Analysis

Diderot's novel was not aimed at condemning Christianity as such but at criticizing cloistered religious life.[12] In Diderot's telling, some critics have claimed,[who?] the Church is depicted as fostering a hierarchical society, exemplified in the power dynamic between the Mother Superior and the girls in the convent, forced as they are against

their will to take the vows and endure what is to them the intolerable life of the convent. On this view, the subjection of the unwilling young women to convent life dehumanized them by repressing their sexuality. Moreover, their plight would have been all the more oppressive since it should be remembered that in France at this period, religious vows were recognized, regulated and enforced not only by the Church but also by the civil authorities. Some broaden their interpretation to suggest that Diderot was out to expose more general victimization of women by the Catholic Church, that forced them to accept the fate imposed upon them by a hierarchical society.[citation needed]

Posthumous publication

Although *The Nun* was completed in about 1780, the work was not published until 1796, after Diderot's death.

Rameau's Nephew

The dialogue *Rameau's Nephew* (French: *Le Neveu de Rameau*) is a "farce-tragedy" reminiscent of the *Satires* of Horace, a favorite classical author of Diderot's whose lines "*Vertumnis, quotquot sunt, natus iniquis*" ("Born under (the influence of) the unfavorable (gods) Vertumnuses, however many they are") appear as epigraph. According to Nicholas Cronk, *Rameau's Nephew* is "arguably the greatest work of the French Enlightenment's greatest writer." [34]

Le Dîner des philosophes painted by Jean Huber. Denis Diderot is the second from the right (seated).

Synopsis

The narrator in the book recounts a conversation with Jean-François Rameau, (fr) nephew of the famous composer Jean-Philippe Rameau. The nephew composes and teaches music with some success but feels disadvantaged by his name and is jealous of his uncle. Eventually he sinks into an indolent and debauched state. After his wife's death, he loses all self-esteem and his brusque manners result in him being ostracized by former friends. A character profile of the nephew is now sketched by Diderot: a man who was once wealthy and comfortable with a pretty wife, who is now living in poverty and decadence, shunned by his friends. And yet this man retains enough of his past to analyze his despondency philosophically and maintains his sense of humor. Essentially he believes in nothing—not in religion, nor in morality; nor in the Rousseau view about nature being better than civilization since in his opinion every species in nature consumes one another.[1]:660 He views the same process at work in the economic world where men consume each other through the legal system.[1]:660–661 The wise man, according to the nephew, will consequently practice hedonism:

Hurrah for wisdom and philosophy!—the wisdom of Solomon: to drink good wines, gorge on choice foods, tumble pretty women, sleep on downy beds; outside of that, all is vanity.[1]:661

The dialogue ends with Diderot calling the nephew a wastrel, a coward, and a glutton

devoid of spiritual values to which the nephew replies: "I believe you are right." [1]:661

Analysis

Diderot's intention in writing the dialogue—whether as a satire on contemporary manners, a reduction of the theory of self-interest to an absurdity, the application of irony to the ethics of ordinary convention, a mere setting for a discussion about music, or a vigorous dramatic sketch of a parasite and a human original—is disputed. In political terms it explores "the bipolarisation of the social classes under absolute monarchy," and insofar as its protagonist demonstrates how the servant often manipulates the master, *Le Neveu de Rameau* can be seen to anticipate Hegel's master–slave dialectic. [35]

Posthumous publication

The publication history of the *Nephew* is circuitous. Written between 1761 and 1774, Diderot never saw the work through to publication during his lifetime, and apparently did not even share it with his friends. After Diderot's death, a copy of the text reached Schiller, who gave it to Goethe, who, in 1805, translated the work into German. [21] Goethe's translation entered France, and was retranslated into French in 1821. Another copy of the text was published in 1823, but it had been expurgated by Diderot's daughter prior to publication. The original manuscript was only found in 1891. [1]:659

Visual arts

Diderot's most intimate friend was the philologist Friedrich Melchior Grimm. [1]:677 They were brought together by their common friend at that time, Jean-Jacques Rousseau. [1]:632 In 1753, Grimm began writing a newsletter, the *La Correspondance littéraire, philosophique et critique*, which he would send to various high personages in Europe. [36]

In 1759, Grimm asked Diderot to report on the biennial art exhibitions in the Louvre for the *Correspondance*. Diderot reported on the Salons between the Salon of 1759 and Salon of 1771 and again in 1775 and 1781. [1]:666–687 Diderot's reports would become "the most celebrated contributions to *La Correspondance*." [36]

According to Charles Augustin Sainte-Beuve, Diderot's reports initiated the French into a new way of laughing, and introduced people to the mystery and purport of colour by ideas. "Before Diderot", Anne Louise Germaine de Staël wrote, "I had never seen anything in pictures except dull and lifeless colours; it was his imagination that gave them relief and life, and it is almost a new sense for which I am indebted to his genius". [4]

Diderot had appended an *Essai sur la peinture* to his report on the 1765 Salon in which he expressed his views on artistic beauty. Goethe described the *Essai sur la peinture* as "a magnificent work; it speaks even more usefully to the poet than to the painter, though for the painter too it is a torch of blazing illumination". [1]:668

Jean-Baptiste Greuze (1725–1805) was Diderot's favorite contemporary artist.[37] Diderot appreciated Greuze's sentimentality, and more particularly Greuze's portrayals of his wife who had once been Diderot's mistress.[1]:668

Theatre

Diderot wrote sentimental plays, *Le Fils naturel* (1757) and *Le Père de famille* (1758), accompanying them with essays on theatrical theory and practice, including "Les Entretiens sur Le Fils Naturel" (Conversations on The Natural Son), in which he announced the principles of a new drama: the 'serious genre', a realistic midpoint between comedy and tragedy that stood in opposition to the stilted conventions of the classical French stage. In 1758, Diderot introduced the concept of the fourth wall, the imaginary "wall" at the front of the stage in a traditional three-walled box set in a proscenium theatre, through which the audience sees the action in the world of the play.[38][39][40] He also wrote *Paradoxe sur le comédien* (Paradox of the Actor), written between 1770 and 1778 but first published after his death in 1830, which is a dramatic essay elucidating a theory of acting in which it is argued that great actors do not experience the emotions they are displaying.[note 2] That essay is also of note for being where the term *l'esprit de l'escalier* (or *l'esprit d'escalier*) comes from. It is a French term used in English for the predicament of thinking of the perfect reply too late.

Diderot and Catherine the Great Journey to Russia

Diderot's travel from Paris to Saint Petersburg in 1773–1774. The blue line marks the outward from 3 June 1773 until 9 October 1773, and the red line marks the return journey 5 March 1774 to 21 October 1774.

When the Russian Empress Catherine the Great heard that Diderot was in need of money, she arranged to buy his library and appoint him caretaker of it until his death, at a salary of 1,000 livres per year. She even paid him 50 years salary in advance.[10] Although Diderot hated traveling,[1]:674 he was obliged to visit her.[1]:448

On 9 October 1773, he reached Saint Petersburg, met Catherine the next day and they had several discussions on various subjects. During his five-month stay at her court, he met her almost every day.[41]:448–449 During these conversations, he would later state, they spoke 'man to man'.[41]:448[note 3]

He would occasionally make his point by slapping her thighs. In a letter to Madame Geoffrin, Catherine wrote:

Your Diderot is an extraordinary man. I emerge from interviews with him with my thighs bruised and quite black. I have been obliged to put a table between us to protect myself and my members.[41]:448

One of the topics discussed was Diderot's ideas about how to transform Russia into a utopia. In a letter to Comte de Ségur, the Empress wrote that if she followed Diderot's

advice, chaos would ensue in her kingdom.[41]:448

Back in France

When returning, Diderot asked the Empress for 1,500 rubles as reimbursement for his trip. She gave him 3,000 rubles, an expensive ring, and an officer to escort him back to Paris. He wrote a eulogy in her honor upon reaching Paris.[41]:449

In 1766, when Catherine heard that Diderot had not received his annual fee for editing the *Encyclopédie* (an important source of income for the philosopher), she arranged for him to receive a massive sum of 50,000 livres as an advance for his services as her librarian.[10]

In July 1784, upon hearing that Diderot was in poor health, Catherine arranged for him to move into a luxurious suite in the Rue de Richelieu. Diderot died two weeks after moving there—on 31 July 1784.[41]:893

Among Diderot's last works were notes "On the Instructions of her Imperial Majesty...for the Drawing up of Laws". This commentary on Russia included replies to some arguments Catherine had made in the *Nakaz*. [41]:449[43] Diderot wrote that Catherine was certainly despotic, due to circumstances and training, but was not inherently tyrannical. Thus, if she wished to destroy despotism in Russia, she should abdicate her throne and destroy anyone who tries to revive the monarchy.[43] She should publicly declare that "there is no true sovereign other than the nation, and there can be no true legislator other than the people." [44] She should create a new Russian legal code establishing an independent legal framework and starting with the text: "We the people, and we the sovereign of this people, swear conjointly these laws, by which we are judged equally." [44] In the *Nakaz*, Catherine had written: "It is for legislation to follow the spirit of the nation." [44] Diderot's rebuttal stated that it is for legislation to make the spirit of the nation. For instance, he argued, it is not appropriate to make public executions unnecessarily horrific.[45]

Ultimately, Diderot decided not to send these notes to Catherine; however, they were delivered to her with his other papers after he died. When she read them, she was furious and commented that they were an incoherent gibberish devoid of prudence, insight, and verisimilitude.[41]:449[46]

Philosophy

Dmitry Levitzky, Denis Diderot, 1773, Musée d'Art et d'Histoire, Geneva

In his youth, Diderot was originally a follower of Voltaire and his deist *Anglomanie*, but gradually moved away from this line of thought towards materialism and atheism, a move which was finally realised in 1747 in the philosophical debate in the second part of his *The Skeptic's Walk* (1747).[47] Diderot opposed mysticism and occultism, which were highly prevalent in France at the time he wrote, and believed religious truth claims must fall under the domain of reason, not mystical experience or esoteric secrets.

However, Diderot showed some interest in the work of Paracelsus.[48] He was "a philosopher in whom all the contradictions of the time struggle with one another" (Rosenkranz).[21]

In his 1754 book *On the interpretation of Nature*, Diderot expounded on his views about nature, evolution, materialism, mathematics, and experimental science.[1]:651–652[49] It is speculated that Diderot may have contributed to his friend Baron d'Holbach's 1770 book *The System of Nature*. [21] Diderot had enthusiastically endorsed the book stating that:

What I like is a philosophy clear, definite, and frank, such as you have in the *System of Nature*. The author is not an atheist on one page and a deist on another. His philosophy is all of one piece.[1]:700

In conceiving the *Encyclopédie*, Diderot had thought of the work as a fight on behalf of posterity and had expressed confidence that posterity would be grateful for his effort. According to Diderot, "posterity is for the philosopher what the 'other world' is for the man of religion." [1]:641

According to Andrew S. Curran, the main questions of Diderot's thought are the following :[50]

Why be moral in a world without god?
How should we appreciate art?
What are we and where do we come from?
What are sex and love?
How can a philosopher intervene in political affairs?
Death and burial

Diderot died of pulmonary thrombosis in Paris on 31 July 1784, and was buried in the city's Église Saint-Roch. His heirs sent his vast library to Catherine II, who had it deposited at the National Library of Russia. He has several times been denied burial in the Panthéon with other French notables.[51]

Diderot's remains were unearthed by grave robbers in 1793, leaving his corpse on the church's floor. His remains were then presumably transferred to a mass grave by the authorities.[52]

Appreciation and influence

Jean-Simon Berthélemy, Young man admiring Denis Diderot's bust
Marmontel and Henri Meister (fr) commented on the great pleasure of having intellectual conversations with Diderot.[1]:678 Morellet, a regular attendee at D'Holbach's salon, wrote: "It is there that I heard...Diderot treat questions of philosophy, art, or literature, and by his wealth of expression, fluency, and inspired appearance, hold our attention for a long stretch of time." [53] Diderot's contemporary, and rival, Jean Jacques Rousseau

wrote in his Confessions that after a few centuries Diderot would be accorded as much respect by posterity as was given to Plato and Aristotle.[1]:678 In Germany, Goethe, Schiller, and Lessing[1]:679 expressed admiration for Diderot's writings, Goethe pronouncing Diderot's Rameau's Nephew to be "the classical work of an outstanding man" and that "Diderot is Diderot, a unique individual; whoever carps at him and his affairs is a philistine." [1]:659[54]

As atheism fell out of favor during the French Revolution, Diderot was vilified and considered responsible for the excessive persecution of the clergy.[55]

In the next century, Diderot was admired by Balzac, Delacroix, Stendhal, Zola, and Schopenhauer.[56] According to Comte, Diderot was the foremost intellectual in an exciting age.[1]:679 Historian Michelet described him as "the true Prometheus" and stated that Diderot's ideas would continue to remain influential long into the future. Marx chose Diderot as his "favourite prose-writer." [57]

Modern tributes

Monument to Denis Diderot in Paris, 6th arrondissement, by Jean Gautherin
Otis Fellows and Norman Torrey have described Diderot as "the most interesting and provocative figure of the French eighteenth century." [58]

In 1993, American writer Cathleen Schine published Rameau's Niece, a satire of academic life in New York that took as its premise a woman's research into an (imagined) 18th-century pornographic parody of Diderot's Rameau's Nephew. The book was praised by Michiko Kakutani in the New York Times as "a nimble philosophical satire of the academic mind" and "an enchanting comedy of modern manners." [59]

French author Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt wrote a play titled Le Libertin (The Libertine) which imagines a day in Diderot's life including a fictional sitting for a woman painter which becomes sexually charged but is interrupted by the demands of editing the Encyclopédie.[60] It was first staged at Paris' Théâtre Montparnasse in 1997 starring Bernard Giraudeau as Diderot and Christiane Cohendy as Madame Therbouche and was well received by critics.[61]

In 2013, the 300th anniversary of Diderot's birth, his hometown of Langres held a series of events in his honor and produced an audio tour of the town highlighting places that were part of Diderot's past, including the remains of the convent where his sister Angélique took her vows.[62] On 6 October 2013, a museum of the Enlightenment focusing on Diderot's contributions to the movement, the Maison des Lumières Denis Diderot, was inaugurated in Langres.[63]

The French government considered memorializing the 300th anniversary of his birth,[64] but this did not come to pass.

Bibliography

icon

This section needs additional citations for verification. Please help improve this article by adding citations to reliable sources in this section. Unsourced material may be challenged and removed.

Find sources: "Denis Diderot" – news · newspapers · books · scholar · JSTOR (July 2017) (Learn how and when to remove this message)

Essai sur le mérite et la vertu, written by Shaftesbury French translation and annotation by Diderot (1745)

Philosophical Thoughts, essay (1746)[65]

La Promenade du sceptique (1747)

The Indiscreet Jewels, novel (1748)

Lettre sur les aveugles à l'usage de ceux qui voient (1749)

Encyclopédie (1750–1765)

Lettre sur les sourds et muets (1751)

Pensées sur l'interprétation de la nature, essai (1751)

Systeme de la Nature (1754)

Le Fils naturel (1757)

Entretiens sur le Fils naturel (1757)

Le père de famille (1758)

Discours sur la poesie dramatique (1758)

Salons, critique d'art (1759–1781)

La Religieuse, Roman (1760; revised in 1770 and in the early 1780s; the novel was first published as a volume posthumously in 1796).

Le neveu de Rameau, dialogue (written between 1761 and 1774).[34][66]

Lettre sur le commerce de la librairie (1763)

Jacques le fataliste et son maître, novel (written between 1765 and 1780; first published posthumously in 1796)

Mystification ou l'histoire des portraits (1768)

Entretien entre D'Alembert et Diderot (1769)

Le rêve de D'Alembert, dialogue (1769)

Suite de l'entretien entre D'Alembert et Diderot (1769)

Paradoxe sur le comédien (written between 1770 and 1778; first published posthumously in 1830)

Apologie de l'abbé Galiani (1770)

Principes philosophiques sur la matière et le mouvement, essai (1770)

Entretien d'un père avec ses enfants (1771)

Ceci n'est pas un conte, story (1772)

Madame de La Carlière, short story and moral fable, (1772)

Supplément au voyage de Bougainville (1772)

Histoire philosophique et politique des deux Indes, in collaboration with Raynal (1772–1781)[67]

Voyage en Hollande (1773)

Éléments de physiologie (1773–1774)

Réfutation d'Helvétius (1774)

Observations sur le Nakaz (1774)
Essai sur les règnes de Claude et de Néron (1778)
Est-il Bon? Est-il méchant? (1781)
Lettre apologétique de l'abbé Raynal à Monsieur Grimm (1781)
Aux insurgents d'Amérique (1782)

See also

Contributions to liberal theory

Diderot effect

Encyclopedist

Encyclopédistes

Euler, Leonhard

List of liberal theorists

Society of the Friends of Truth

Paris Diderot University

Notes

Bijou is a slang word meaning the vagina.[18]

This contradicts the view of Horace with regard to the use of emotion in rhetoric: Si vis me flere, primum tibi flendum est (If you wish me to weep you must first weep yourself). [1]:624

Diderot later narrated the following conversation as having taken place:

Catherine: "You have a hot head, and I have one too. We interrupt each other, we do not hear what the other one says, and so we say stupid things."

Diderot: "With this difference, that when I interrupt your Majesty, I commit a great impertinence."

Catherine: "No, between men there is no such thing as impertinence." [42]

References

Durant, Will (1965). The Story of Civilization Volume 9: The Age of Voltaire. Simon & Schuster.

"Diderot". Random House Webster's Unabridged Dictionary.

"Denis Diderot | Biography, philosophy, Works, Beliefs, Enlightenment, & Facts". Encyclopedia Britannica. Retrieved 25 June 2021.

Wikisource One or more of the preceding sentences incorporates text from a publication now in the public domain: Morley, John (1911). "Diderot, Denis". In Chisholm, Hugh (ed.). Encyclopædia Britannica. Vol. 8 (11th ed.). Cambridge University Press. pp. 204–206.

Arthur Wilson, Diderot (New York: Oxford, 1972).

Verzaal, Elly (25 October 2013). "Diderot op de Kneuterdijk (1)" [Diderot on Kneuterdijk (1)] (in Dutch). National Library of the Netherlands. Archived from the original on 21 October 2014.

Norman Hampson. The Enlightenment. 1968. Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1982. p. 128 [ISBN missing]

Gopnik, Adam. "How the Man of Reason got Radicalized". The New Yorker. Retrieved

27 February 2019.

Arthur M. Wilson. *Diderot: The Testing Years, 1713–1759*. New York: Oxford University Press, 1957, p. 14 [1]

Curran, Andrew (2019). *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*. Other Press. p. 319. ISBN 978-159051-670-6.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, p. 143 [ISBN missing]

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, p. 275

Mark Twain, "A Majestic Literary Fossil", originally from *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, vol. 80, issue 477, pp. 439–444, February 1890. Online at Harper's site.

Accessed 24 September 2006.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 27.

Bryan Magee. *The Story of Philosophy*. DK Publishing, Inc., New York: 1998. p. 124

Otis Fellows (1977). *Diderot*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 41.

Durant, Will. "The Age of Voltaire: A History of Civilization in Western Europe from 1715 to 1756". *erenow.org*. Simon and Schuster. Retrieved 27 July 2025.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 44.

Rodin Pucci, Suzanne (1990). "The discreet charms of the exotic: fictions of the harem in eighteenth-century France". In George Sebastian Rousseau; Roy Porter (eds.).

Exoticism in the Enlightenment. Manchester University Press. p. 156. ISBN 978-0719026775. Retrieved 12 December 2016.

Gillispie, Charles Coulston (1960). *The Edge of Objectivity: An Essay in the History of Scientific Ideas*. Princeton University Press. pp. 190–191. ISBN 0691023506.

Morley 1911.

Stephens, Mitchell (2014). *Imagine there's no heaven: how atheism helped create the modern world*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. pp. 123–124. ISBN 978-1137002600.

OCLC 852658386. Retrieved 21 June 2014.

Diderot's contemporary, also a Frenchman, Pierre Louis Maupertuis—who in 1745 was named Head of the Prussian Academy of Science under Frederic the Great—was developing similar ideas. These proto-evolutionary theories were by no means as thought out and systematic as those of Charles Darwin a hundred years later.

Jonathan I. Israel, *Radical Enlightenment: Philosophy and the Making of Modernity 1650–1750*. (Oxford University Press. 2001, 2002), p. 710 [ISBN missing]

Zirkle, Conway (25 April 1941). "Natural Selection before the 'Origin of Species'".

Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society. 84 (1). Philadelphia, PA: American Philosophical Society: 71–123. ISSN 0003-049X. JSTOR 984852.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, pp. 95–96

Will Durant; Ariel Durant (2011). *The Age of Voltaire: The Story of Civilization, Volume IX*. Simon and Schuster. p. 781. ISBN 978-1451647662.

Examples are Diderot's articles on Asian philosophy and religion; see Urs App. *The Birth of Orientalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2010 (ISBN 978-0812242614), pp. 133–187.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, pp. 161–164

Lyons, Martyn. "Books: A Living History". Getty Publishing, 2011, p. 107.

Curran, Andrew S. (15 December 2018). "'Beware the affluence of gold': on reading Diderot in the age of Trump". *The Guardian*. ISSN 0261-3077. Retrieved 5 February 2019.

P. N. Furbank. *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. New York: Knopf, 1992, p. 273. [ISBN missing]

Jacques Smietanski, *Le Réalisme dans Jacques le Fataliste* (Paris: Nizet, 1965); Will McMorran, *The Inn and the Traveller: Digressive Topographies in the Early Modern European Novel* (Oxford: Legenda, 2002).

Nicholas Cronk, "Introduction", in *Rameau's Nephew and First Satire*, Oxford: Oxford UP, 2006 (pp. vii–xxv), p. vii.

Jean Varloot, "Préface", in: Jean Varloot, ed. *Le Neveu de Rameau et autres dialogues philosophiques*, Paris: Gallimard, 1972 pp. 9–28, pp. 25–26. [ISBN missing]

Jacobs, Alan (11 February 2014). "Grimm's Heirs". *The New Atlantis: A Journal of Technology and Society*. Archived from the original on 16 April 2014. Retrieved 16 August 2015.

Edmond and Jules de Goncourt, *French Eighteenth-Century Painters*. Cornell Paperbacks, 1981, pp. 222–225. ISBN 0801492181

Bell, Elizabeth S. (2008). *Theories of Performance*. Los Angeles: Sage. p. 203. ISBN 978-1412926379.

Wallis, Mick; Shepherd, Simon (1998). *Studying plays*. London: Arnold. p. 214. ISBN 0340731567.

Abelman, Robert (1998). *Reaching a critical mass: a critical analysis of television entertainment*. Mahwah, NJ: L. Erlbaum Associates. pp. 8–11. ISBN 0805821996.

Durant, Will (1967). *The Story of Civilization Volume 10: Rousseau and Revolution*. Simon & Schuster.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 379.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 393.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 394.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. pp. 394–395.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. p. 395.

Jonathan I. Israel, *Enlightenment Contested*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 791, 818.

Josephson-Storm, Jason (2017). *The Myth of Disenchantment: Magic, Modernity, and the Birth of the Human Sciences*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. pp. 53–55. ISBN 978-0226403366.

P.N. Furbank (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. Alfred A. Knopf. pp. 109–115.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, p. 14

Blom, Philipp. "In the Panthéon". *Lapham's Quarterly*. Archived from the original on 13 November 2012. Retrieved 27 January 2013.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, pp. 1–2

Arthur M. Wilson (1972). *Diderot*. Oxford University Press. p. 175.

Hammer, Carl Jr. (2015). *Goethe and Rousseau: Resonances of the Mind*. University Press of Kentucky. p. 26.

Andrew S. Curran, *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*, Other Press, 2019, pp. 395–397

P.N. Furbank. *Diderot: A Critical Biography*. New York: Knopf, 1992. p. 446

David McClellan. *Karl Marx: His Life and Thought*. New York: Harper & Row, 1973. p. 457

Ottis Fellows and Norman Torrey (1949), *Diderot Studies*, vol. 1, p. vii

"Specials". www.nytimes.com.

"Theatre". www.eric-emmanuel-schmitt.com.

"Eric-Emmanuel Schmitt". www.theatreonline.com.

"Club de trading IQ Option & eToro Diderot". diderot2013-langres.fr. Club basé à Diderot Langres. Archived from the original on 2 May 2014. Retrieved 14 May 2014.

"Diderot 2013, Langres en fête". France 3 Grand Est. 23 June 2023.

Curran, Andrew S. (24 January 2013). "Diderot, an American Exemplar? Bien Sûr!". *New York Times*. Archived from the original on 1 January 2022. Retrieved 27 January 2013.

Wolfe, Charles T.; Shank, J.B. (1 January 2024), "Denis Diderot", *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, retrieved 2 October 2024

Diderot "Le Neveu de Rameau", *Les Trésors de la littérature Française*, p. 109. Collection dirigée par Edmond Jaloux; <http://www.denis-diderot.com/publications.html>

"A Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies". *World Digital Library*. 1798. Retrieved 30 August 2013.

Further reading

French and Francophone literature

by category

History

MedievalRenaissance17th18th19th20th centuryContemporary

Movements

PrécieusesClassicismRococoDecadentParnassianismSymbolismNouveau roman

Writers

Chronological listWriters by categoryEssayistsNovelistsPlaywrightsPoetsShort story writersChildren's writers

Countries and regions

FranceQuebecFranco-AmericanHaitiPostcolonial

Portals

FranceLiterature

vte

Anderson, Wilda C. *Diderot's Dream*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1990.

App, Urs (2010). *The Birth of Orientalism*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, ISBN 978-0812242614, pp. 133–187 on Diderot's role in the European discovery of Hinduism and Buddhism.

Azurmendi, Joxe (1984). *Entretien d'un philosophe: Diderot (1713–1784)*, *Jakin*, 32: 111–121.

Ballstadt, Kurt P.A. *Diderot: Natural Philosopher*. Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2008.

Blom, Philipp (2010). *The Wicked Company*. New York: Basic Books

Blum, Carol (1974). *Diderot: The Virtue of a Philosopher*

Brewer, Daniel. *Using the Encyclopédie: Ways of Knowing, Ways of Reading*. Oxford:

Voltaire Foundation, 2002.

Carlyle, Thomas (1833). "Diderot". *Critical and Miscellaneous Essays: Volume III. The Works of Thomas Carlyle in Thirty Volumes. Vol. XXVIII.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons (published 1904). pp. 177–248.

Clark, Andrew Herrick. *Diderot's Part.* Aldershot, Hampshire, England: Ashgate, 2008.

Caplan, Jay. *Framed Narratives: Diderot's Genealogy of the Beholder.* Manchester: Manchester UP, 1986.

Crocker, Lester G. (1974). *Diderot's Chaotic Order: Approach to a Synthesis*

Curran, Andrew S. (2019). *Diderot and the Art of Thinking Freely*

D'Antuono, Giuseppina. (2021) "Historiographical heritages: Denis Diderot and the men of the French Revolution." *Diciottesimo Secolo* 6 (2021): 161–168. online

De la Carrera, Rosalina. *Success in Circuit Lies: Diderot's Communicational Practice.* Stanford, CA: Stanford UP, 1991.

Dlugach, Tamara. *Denis Diderot.* Moscow: Progress Publishers. 1988.

Fellows, Otis E. (1989). *Diderot*

France, Peter (1983). *Diderot*

Fontenay, Elisabeth de, and Jacques Proust. *Interpréter Diderot Aujourd'hui.* Paris: Le Sycomore, 1984.

Furbank, P.N. (1992). *Diderot: A Critical Biography.* New York: A.A. Knopf,. ISBN 0679414215.

Gregory Efrosini, Mary (2006). *Diderot and the Metamorphosis of Species (Studies in Philosophy).* New York: Routledge. ISBN 0415955513.

Havens, George R. (1955) *The Age of Ideas.* New York: Holt ISBN 0891976515.

Hayes, Julia Candler. *The Representation of the Self in the Theater of La Chaussée, Diderot, and Sade.* Ann Arbor, MI: University Microfilms International, 1982.

Hazard, Paul. *European thought in the eighteenth century from Montesquieu to Lessing* (1954). pp. 378–394

Kavanagh, Thomas. "The Vacant Mirror: A Study of Mimesis through Diderot's *Jacques le Fataliste*," in *Studies on Voltaire and the Eighteenth Century* 104 (1973).

Korolev, Serguei V. *La Bibliothèque de Diderot: Vers une reconstitution.* Ferney-Voltaire: Centre international d'étude du XVIIIe siècle, 2014. ISBN 978-2845590939

Kuzincki, Jason (2008). "Diderot, Denis (1713–1784)". In Hamowy, Ronald (ed.). *The Encyclopedia of Libertarianism.* Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage; Cato Institute. pp. 124–125. doi:10.4135/9781412965811.n78. ISBN 978-1412965804. LCCN 2008009151. OCLC 750831024.

Lentin, A. "Catherine the Great and Denis Diderot" *History Today* (May 1972), pp. 313–332.

Mason, John H. (1982). *The Irresistible Diderot* ISBN 0704334690

Peretz, Eyal (2013). *"Dramatic Experiments: Life according to Diderot"* State University of New York Press

Rex, Walter E. *Diderot's Counterpoints: The Dynamics of Contrariety in His Major Works.* Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 1998.

Saint-Amand, Pierre. *Diderot.* Saratoga, CA: Anma Libri, 1984.

Simon, Julia (1995). *Mass Enlightenment.* Albany: State University of New York Press,. ISBN 0791426386.

Tunstall, Kate E. (2011). *Blindness and Enlightenment. An Essay.* With a new translation of Diderot's Letter on the Blind. Continuum

Wilson, Arthur McCandless (1972). *Diderot, the standard biography*

Vasco, Gerhard M. (1978). "Diderot and Goethe, A Study in Science and Humanism", Librairie Slatkine, Librairie Champion.

Zaretsky, Robert (2019). *Catherine and Diderot : the Empress, the philosopher, and the Fate of the Enlightenment.* Harvard UP. ISBN 978-0674737907.

Primary sources

Diderot, Denis, ed. *A Diderot Pictorial Encyclopedia of Trades and Industry, Vol. 1* (1993 reprint) excerpt and text search

Diderot, Denis. *Diderot: Political Writings* ed. by John Hope Mason and Robert Wokler (1992) excerpt and text search, with introduction

Diderot, Denis. *Thoughts on Religion* (2002 edition) Translated and edited by Nicolas Walter. G.W. Foote & Co. Ltd. *Freethinker's Classics* No. 4. ISBN 978-1911578024.

Main works of Diderot in English translation

Hoyt, Nellie and Cassirer, Thomas. *Encyclopedia, Selections: Diderot, D'Alembert, and a Society of Men of Letters.* New York: Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1965. LCCN 65-26535. ISBN 0672604795.

Kemp, Jonathan (ed). *Diderot, Interpreter of Nature: Selected Writings.* New York: International Publishers, 1963.

External links

English Wikisource has original works by or about:
Denis Diderot

Wikiquote has quotations related to Denis Diderot.

Wikimedia Commons has media related to Denis Diderot.

Digital collections

Works by Denis Diderot in eBook form at Standard Ebooks

Works by Denis Diderot at Project Gutenberg

Works by or about Denis Diderot at the Internet Archive

Works by Denis Diderot at LibriVox (public domain audiobooks)

Other encyclopedias

Denis Diderot Archive (in English)

The ARTFL Encyclopédie, provided by the ARTFL Project of the University of Chicago (articles in French, scans of 18th century print copies provided)

The Encyclopedia of Diderot & d'Alembert Collaborative Translation Project, product of the Scholarly Publishing Office of the University of Michigan Library (an effort to translate the Encyclopédie into English)

Other links

Diderot Archived 16 November 2016 at the Wayback Machine Search engine in French for human sciences in tribute to Diderot

Denis Diderot: Rêve d'Alembert (d'Alembert's Dream) (French and English texts)

Archived 22 September 2016 at the Wayback Machine

Conversation between D'Alembert and Diderot (alternate translation of the first part of the above)

Denis Diderot Website (in French)

(in French) On line version of the Encyclopédie. The articles are classified in alphabetical order (26 files).

Short biography

Denis Diderot Bibliography Archived 30 January 2022 at the Wayback Machine

Le Neveu de Rameau – Diderot et Goethe

The Encyclopédie, BBC Radio 4 discussion with Judith Hawley, Caroline Warman and David Wootton (In Our Time, 26 October 2006)

Portals:

Biography

icon Economics

flag France

icon Liberalism

diagram Libertarianism

icon Politics

vte

Denis Diderot

Links to related articles

Authority control databases Edit this at Wikidata

Categories: Denis Diderot1713 births1784 deaths18th-century atheists18th-century French essayists18th-century French dramatists and playwrights18th-century French novelists18th-century French male writers18th-century French philosophersAtheist philosophersBurials at Saint-Roch, ParisContributors to the Encyclopédie (1751–1772)French critics of ChristianityFrench critics of religionsCritics of the Catholic ChurchFrench encyclopedistsEnlightenment philosophersFrench epistemologistsFrench art criticsFrench atheistsFrench erotica writersFrench literary criticsFrench male novelistsFrench materialistsFrench male essayistsLycée Louis-le-Grand alumniLycée Saint-Louis alumniMembers of the Prussian Academy of SciencesOntologistsPeople from LangresPeople of the Age of EnlightenmentFrench philosophers of artFrench philosophers of cultureFrench philosophers of educationPhilosophers of lawPhilosophers of literatureFrench philosophers of religionFrench philosophers of sciencePhilosophers of sexualityWriters from Grand EstRespiratory disease deaths in FranceDeaths from pulmonary thrombosisUniversity of Paris alumni

This page was last edited on 11 December 2025, at 13:50 (UTC).

Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 License; additional terms may apply. By using this site, you agree to the Terms of Use and Privacy Policy. Wikipedia® is a registered trademark of the Wikimedia Foundation, Inc., a non-profit organization.

Privacy policyAbout WikipediaDisclaimersContact WikipediaCode of ConductDevelopersStatisticsCookie statementMobile view

Wikimedia Foundation

Powered by MediaWiki

Skip to main contentAccessibility help

Accessibility feedback
Seasonal Holidays 2025
Carl Jung

AI Mode
All
Images
Videos
Short videos
Shopping
News
More
Tools
Carl Jung
Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist
Overview

Books
Carl Gustav Jung; often referred to as C. G. Jung; was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychotherapist who founded analytical psychology. Photograph. 1955. (Photo by Votava/Imagno/Getty Images)
brandstaetter images/Getty Images
Carl Jung | Biography, Archetypes, Books, Collective ...
Carl Jung: Biography, Analytical Psychologist

8:42

YouTube • After Skool
Carl Jung - Love the Enemy Within (Read by Alan Watts)
Carl Gustav Jung (26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and psychologist who founded the school of ...
Sep 9, 2025
Born
Jul 26, 1875
Kesswil, Switzerland
Died
Jun 6, 1961
Küsnacht, Switzerland

Instagram
19 powerful sentences by Carl Jung that will change how you view the world: Carl Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded analytical psychology. His philosophy and contributions to psychology encompass several key areas like Collective Unconscious, Individuation, Synchronicity, Alchemy and Spirituality, etc. Jung's

philosophy was deeply integrative, combining insights from mythology, ...

Aug 3, 2025

People also ask

What is Carl Jung's theory?

What was controversial about Carl Jung?

Does Jung believe in God?

Why did Carl Jung say life begins at 40?

Feedback

Carl Jung

Wikipedia

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Carl_Jung

26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and psychologist who founded the school of analytical psychology.

Publications

Jungian archetypes

Emma Jung

Karl Gustav Jung

Books

The Red Book

2009

Dictionary of Analytical Psychology

1921

Freud-Jung Letters

1974

The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious

1959

Synchronicity

1952

Memories, Dreams, Reflections

1961

Psychology and Alchemy

1944

Answer to Job

1952

Modern Man in Search of a Soul

1933

See more

The Jung Page - Home

The Jung Page

<https://jungpage.org>

the pioneering psychologist, The Jung Page provides online educational resources for the Jungian community around the world. psychology and culture.

What people are saying

18:55

Carl Jung, Finally Explained

40.4K+ views · 2 weeks ago

David Bayer · YouTube

Mindset & business strategist

0:59

When Carl Jung was asked if he believed in God, he paused and said: "I don't believe — I know." Not as theology. Not as religion. But as lived experience. Jung discovered that God does not first appear in doctrine, but in dreams, symbols, the body, and the unconscious. In moments where the soul is stripped bare. Where certainty dissolves. Where something greater meets you from within. Belief is passive. Knowing requires encounter. To know God is not to explain Him, it is to stay present at the edge of mystery long enough for Him to reveal Himself. Because he's omnipresent. "The Kingdom of Heaven is within you." #heal #mindfulmovement #love

1K+ likes · 1 day ago

jules_horn · Instagram

Somatic healer & practitioner

The resurgence of depth psychology may signal that something important is missing.

2 weeks ago

Chester H. Sunde, Psy.D · Psychology Today

Licensed clinical psychologist

Carl Jung's Thoughts On Anxiety and Depression

5 days ago

Andy Murphy

Medium

What is next in the world?

Popular comment · An interesting tidbit. On his deathbed he talked about "in the next 50 years" there'd be the last catastrophe for the human race. 50 years from his death would have been 2011, just shy of 2012. And everyone knows the Mayan calendar. Just an interesting thing to point out.

·
60+ comments · 2 days ago

r/Jung
Reddit

No coming to consciousness without pain - Carl Jung
40+ reactions · 11 hours ago

The Collective Spiritual Consciousness · Facebook
Spiritual growth & learning

5:09
The Daily Routine of Carl Jung
31K+ views · 1 month ago

Sisyphus 55 · YouTube
Philosophy & psychology YouTuber

This Will Change Everything You Know About Yourself, Says Carl Jung
Oct 14, 2025

Thomas Oppong · Medium
Technology blogger & consultant

Carl Jung's Model of the Psyche @theuniverse_calling 🗨️
1K+ likes · 3 days ago

theuniverse_calling
Instagram

As Carl Jung put it, "Man needs difficulties. They are necessary for health." Yet most people instinctually avoid pain. This is true whether we are talking about building the body (e.g., weight lifting) or the mind (e.g., frustration, mental struggle, embarrassment, shame)--and especially true when people confront the harsh reality of their own imperfections.

140+ likes · 4 days ago

raydalio · Threads

Founder of Bridgewater Associates

What do we think of Carl Jung?

Popular comment · He developed Shadow Work, this alone makes him one of the goats of enlightened minds. Not to mention the “collective unconscious”, archetypes, individuation, and synchronicity. He was mystical AF in actuality and helped map and bring scientific and analytical rigor into “the woo”. That’s why he and his ideas are so respected today. By the end of his life he no longer “believed in” God... but he knew God.

.

60+ comments · 1 week ago

r/enlightenment

Reddit

12:41

Carl Jung - How Life Changes After 40

147.4K+ views · 1 month ago

Academy of Ideas · YouTube

Podcast on psychology

Theories and techniques

.

Explore Carl Jung's theories on life rules, the subconscious, shadow work, anxiety, authenticity, and the path to self-discovery.

Making darkness conscious is key

.

Enlightenment comes from acknowledging and integrating our shadow selves, not by avoiding the darkness within our souls.

Living an unlived life

.

Explore the tragedy of an unlived life, bitterness, and the importance of embracing inner possibilities.

Show 1 more

Videos

The Man Who Solved Addiction | Carl Jung

YouTube · Aperture

Jul 31, 2025

YouTube · Aperture

39:44

Addiction is not just about chemicals or choices. It's a psychological trap that rewires the brain and hijacks its natural learning system.

Carl Jung - Love the Enemy Within (Read by Alan Watts)

YouTube · After Skool
Sep 9, 2025
YouTube · After Skool

8:42

The enemy within is not someone to be condemned but accepted and loved. This is the essence of Christianity and the key to healing neuroses.

A Guide To Stop Wasting Your Life: Carl Jung's Path to ...

YouTube · SUCCESS CHASERS

Jan 24, 2025

YouTube · SUCCESS CHASERS

50:48

Carl Jung's ideas help us stop wasting life by understanding ourselves, confronting the shadow, and aligning with our true desires.

Feedback

View all

Carl Jung | Biography, Archetypes & Beliefs | The SAP

The SAP (Society of Analytical Psychology)

<https://www.thesap.org.uk> › carl-gustav-jung

Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist and psychoanalyst who founded the idea of analytical psychology. Jung was born in 1875, near Lake Constance in ...

WHO IS CARL JUNG | jung.org

jung.org

<https://jung.org> › pages › who-is-carl-jung

Carl Gustav Jung (1875-1961) was one of the pioneers of modern depth psychology and psychoanalysis. Born near Basle, and working mostly in Zurich, Switzerland, ...

The Red Book of Carl G. Jung: Its Origins and Influence

The Library of Congress (.gov)

<https://www.loc.gov> › exhibits › the-red-book-and-beyond

The material in the Red Book came from Jung's exploration of his unconscious and his encounters with the works of many cultural figures.

Carl Jung

Shippensburg University

<https://webpace.ship.edu> › cgboer › jung

Jung's theory divides the psyche into three parts. The first is the ego, which Jung identifies with the conscious mind. Closely related is the personal ...

Carl Jung | Biography, Archetypes, Books, Collective ...

Britannica

<https://www.britannica.com> › ... › Medicine › Physicians

Dec 4, 2025 — Carl Jung, Swiss psychologist and psychiatrist who founded analytic psychology. Jung developed the concepts of the extraverted and the ...
Carl Gustav Jung

International Association of Analytical Psychology – IAAP

<https://iaap.org> › jung-analytical-psychology › carl-gust...

(1875-1961) Carl Gustav Jung was born in the small village of Kesswil near Lake Constance established him as a leading figure in psychiatry,

People also search for

Carl Jung books PDF

Carl Jung books

Carl Jung quotes

Carl Jung theory of personality

Carl Jung pronunciation

Carl Jung philosophy

Carl Jung influenced

Why is Carl Jung important

1

2

3

4

5

6

7

8

9

10

Next

Overview

Carl Gustav Jung was a Swiss psychiatrist, psychologist, and psychotherapist who established analytical psychology. He's best known for his concepts of archetypes and personality orientations, "extroversion" and "introversion". Jung believed that the human experience is similar across history and cultures, and that a reservoir of psychic resources, called archetypes, are passed down through generations.

More

Born: July 26, 1875, Kesswil, Switzerland

Died: June 6, 1961 (age 85 years), Küsnacht, Switzerland

Influenced: Sigmund Freud, Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow · See more

Influenced by: Sigmund Freud, Arthur Schopenhauer · See more

Children: Gret Baumann, Agathe Niehus, Marianne Niehus, Helene Hoerni, Franz Jung-Merker

Spouse: Emma Jung (m. 1903–1955)

Feedback

People also search for

Sigmund Freud

Emma Jung

Alfred Adler

Gret Baumann

Results are personalized

-

Try without personalization

72116, North Little Rock, AR - From your IP address

- Update location

[Help](#)[Send feedback](#)[Privacy](#)[Terms](#)

WikipediaThe Free Encyclopedia

[Donate](#)

[Create account](#)

[Log in](#)

Carl Jung

[Article](#)

[Talk](#)

[Read](#)

[Edit](#)

[View history](#)

[Tools](#)

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

"Jung" redirects here. For his grandfather, a professor of medicine, see Karl Gustav Jung. For other uses, see Jung (disambiguation).

Carl Jung

Jung, c. 1935

Born Carl Gustav Jung

26 July 1875

Kesswil, Thurgau, Switzerland

Died 6 June 1961 (aged 85)

Küsnacht, Zurich, Switzerland

Alma mater

University of Basel

University of Zurich
Known for
Analytical psychology
Psychological Types
Collective unconscious
Complex
Archetypes
Anima and animus
Enantiodromia
Synchronicity
Shadow
Extraversion and introversion
Spouse Emma Rauschenbach

(m. 1903; died 1955)
Children 5
Relatives Karl Gustav Jung (grandfather)
Scientific career
Fields
Psychiatrypsychology
Institutions
Burghölzli
Doctoral advisor Eugen Bleuler
Signature

Part of a series of articles on
Psychoanalysis

Sigmund Freud's couch
Concepts
Important figures
Important works
Schools of thought
Training
See also
Psychology portal
vte

Carl Gustav Jung (/jʊŋ/ YUUNG;^[1]^[2] Swiss Standard German: [kɑrl jʊŋ]; 26 July 1875 – 6 June 1961) was a Swiss psychiatrist, psychotherapist, and psychologist who founded the school of analytical psychology.^[3]^[a] A prolific author of over twenty books, illustrator, and correspondent, Jung was a complex and convoluted academic, best known for his concept of archetypes. Alongside contemporaries^[b] Sigmund Freud and Alfred Adler, Jung became one of the most influential psychologists of the early 20th century and has fostered not only scholarship, but also popular interest.^[6]

Jung's work has been influential in the fields of psychiatry, anthropology, archaeology, literature, philosophy, psychology,[7] and religious studies. He worked as a research scientist at the Burghölzli psychiatric hospital in Zurich, under Eugen Bleuler. Jung established himself as an influential mind, developing a friendship with Freud, founder of psychoanalysis, conducting a lengthy correspondence paramount to their joint vision of human psychology. Jung is widely regarded as one of the most influential psychologists in history.[8][9]

Freud saw the younger Jung not only as the heir he had been seeking to take forward his "new science" of psychoanalysis but as a means to legitimize his own work: Freud and other contemporary psychoanalysts were Jews facing rising antisemitism in Europe, and Jung was raised as Christian, although he did not strictly adhere to traditional Christian doctrine, he saw religion, including Christianity, as a powerful expression of the human psyche and its search for meaning.[10] Freud secured Jung's appointment as president of Freud's newly founded International Psychoanalytical Association. Jung's research and personal vision, however, made it difficult to follow his older colleague's doctrine, and they parted ways. This division was painful for Jung and resulted in the establishment of Jung's analytical psychology, as a comprehensive system separate from psychoanalysis.

Among the central concepts of analytical psychology is individuation—the lifelong psychological process of differentiation of the self out of each individual's conscious and unconscious elements. Jung considered it to be the main task of human development. He created some of the best-known psychological concepts, including synchronicity, archetypal phenomena, the collective unconscious, the psychological complex, and extraversion and introversion. His treatment of American businessman and politician Rowland Hazard in 1926 with his conviction that alcoholics may recover if they have a "vital spiritual (or religious) experience" played a crucial role in the chain of events that led to the formation of Alcoholics Anonymous.[11] Jung was an artist, craftsman, builder, and prolific writer. Many of his works were not published until after his death, and some remain unpublished.[12]

Biography

Early life

Childhood

Birthplace in Kesswil TG

Carl Gustav Jung[c] was born 26 July 1875 in Kesswil, in the Swiss canton of Thurgau, as the first surviving son of Paul Achilles Jung (1842–1896) and Emilie Preiswerk (1848–1923).[13] His birth was preceded by two stillbirths and that of a son named Paul, born in 1873, who survived only a few days.[14][15]

Paul Jung, Carl's father, was the youngest son of a noted German-Swiss professor of medicine at Basel, Karl Gustav Jung (1794–1864).[16] Paul's hopes of achieving a fortune never materialised, nor did he progress beyond the status of an impoverished

rural pastor in the Swiss Reformed Church. Emilie Preiswerk, Carl's mother, had also grown up in a large family whose Swiss roots went back five centuries. Emilie was the youngest child of a distinguished Basel churchman and academic, Samuel Preiswerk (1799–1871), and his second wife. Samuel Preiswerk was an Antistes (the title given to the head of the Reformed clergy in the city) as well as a Hebraist, author, and editor, who taught Paul Jung as his professor of Hebrew at Basel University.[14]: 17–19

The clergy house in Kleinhüningen, Basel, where Jung grew up
Jung's father was appointed to a more prosperous parish in Laufen when Carl was six months old. Tensions between father and mother had developed. Jung's mother was an eccentric and depressed woman; she spent considerable time in her bedroom, where she said spirits visited her at night.[17] Though she was normal during the day, Jung recalled that at night his mother became strange and mysterious. He said that one night, he saw a faintly luminous and indefinite figure coming from her room, with a head detached from the neck and floating in the air in front of the body. Jung had a better relationship with his father.[17]

Jung's mother left Laufen for several months of hospitalization near Basel for some unspecified physical ailment. His father took Carl to be cared for by Emilie Jung's unmarried sister in Basel, but he was later brought back to his father's residence. Emilie Jung's continuing bouts of absence and depression deeply troubled her son and caused him to associate women with "innate unreliability", whereas "father" meant for him reliability, but also powerlessness.[18] In his memoir, Jung would remark that this parental influence was the "handicap I started off with". Later, these early impressions were revised: "I have trusted men friends and been disappointed by them, and I have mistrusted women and was not disappointed." [19] After three years living in Laufen, Paul Jung requested a transfer. In 1879, he was called to Kleinhüningen, next to Basel, where his family lived in a church parsonage.[20] The relocation brought Emilie Jung closer to contact with her family and lifted her melancholy.[21] When he was 9, Jung's sister Johanna Gertrud (1884–1935) was born. Known in the family as "Trudi", she became a secretary to her brother.[14]: 349

Memories of childhood

Jung was a solitary and introverted child. From childhood, he believed that, like his mother,[22] he had two personalities—a modern Swiss citizen and a personality more suited to the 18th century.[23] "Personality Number 1", as he termed it, was a typical schoolboy living in the era of the time. "Personality Number 2" was a dignified, authoritative, and influential man from the past. Though Jung was close to both parents, he was disappointed by his father's academic approach to faith.[24]

Jung as a child, early 1880s

Some childhood memories made lifelong impressions on him. As a boy, he carved a tiny mannequin into the end of the wooden ruler from his pencil case and placed it inside it.

He added a stone, which he had painted into upper and lower halves, and hid the case in the attic. Periodically, he would return to the mannequin, often bringing tiny sheets of paper with messages inscribed on them in his own secret language.[25] He later reflected that this ceremonial act brought him a feeling of inner peace and security. Years later, he discovered similarities between his personal experience and the practices associated with totems in Indigenous cultures, such as the collection of soul-stones near Arlesheim or the tjurungas of Australia. He concluded that his intuitive ceremonial act was an unconscious ritual, which he had practiced in a way that was strikingly similar to those in distant locations which he, as a young boy, knew nothing about.[26] His observations about symbols, archetypes, and the collective unconscious were inspired, in part, by these early experiences combined with his later research.[27] [28]

At the age of 12, shortly before the end of his first year at the Humanistisches Gymnasium in Basel, Jung was pushed to the ground by another boy so hard he momentarily lost consciousness. (Jung later recognized the incident was indirectly his fault.) A thought then came to him—"Now you won't have to go to school anymore".[29] From then on, whenever he walked to school or began homework, he fainted. He remained home for six months until he overheard his father speaking hurriedly to a visitor about the boy's future ability to support himself. They suspected he had epilepsy. Confronted with his family's poverty, he realized the need for academic excellence. He entered his father's study and began poring over Latin grammar. He fainted three more times but eventually overcame the urge and did not faint again. This event, Jung later recalled, "was when I learned what a neurosis is".[30]

University studies and early career

Old main building of the University of Basel (foreground), where Jung studied between 1895 and 1900

Initially, Jung had aspirations of becoming a Christian minister. His household had a strong moral sense, and several of his family were clergy. Jung had wanted to study archaeology, but his family could not afford to send him further than the University of Basel, which did not teach it. After studying philosophy in his teens, Jung decided against the path of religious traditionalism and decided to pursue psychiatry and medicine.[28] His interest was captured—it combined the biological and spiritual, exactly what he was searching for.[31] In 1895 Jung began to study medicine at the University of Basel. Barely a year later, his father, Paul, died and left the family nearly destitute. They were helped by relatives who also contributed to Jung's studies.[32] During his student days, he entertained his contemporaries with the family legend that his paternal grandfather was the illegitimate son of Goethe and his German great-grandmother, Sophie Ziegler. In later life, he pulled back from this tale, saying only that Sophie was a friend of Goethe's niece.[33]

It was during this early period when Jung was an assistant at the Anatomical Institute at Basel University, that he took an interest in palaeoanthropology and the revolutionary

discoveries of *Homo erectus* and Neanderthal fossils. These formative experiences contributed to his fascination with the evolutionary past of humanity and his belief that an ancient evolutionary layer in the psyche, represented by early fossil hominins, is still evident in the psychology of modern humans.[34]

In 1900, Jung moved to Zurich and began working at the Burghölzli psychiatric hospital under Eugen Bleuler.[35] Bleuler was already in communication with the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud. Jung's dissertation, published in 1903, was titled *On the Psychology and Pathology of So-Called Occult Phenomena*. It was based on the analysis of the supposed mediumship of Jung's cousin Hélène Preiswerk, under the influence of Freud's contemporary Théodore Flournoy.[36] Jung studied with Pierre Janet in Paris in 1902[37] and later equated his view of the complex with Janet's *idée fixe* subconsciente.[38] In 1905, Jung was appointed as a permanent 'senior' doctor at the hospital and became a lecturer Privatdozent in the medical faculty of Zurich University.[39] In 1904, he published with Franz Riklin their *Diagnostic Association Studies*, of which Freud obtained a copy.[40][41] In 1909, Jung left the psychiatric hospital and began a private practice in his home in Küsnacht.[42]

Eventually, a close friendship and strong professional association developed between the elder Freud and Jung, which left a sizeable correspondence. In late summer 1909, the two sailed for the U.S., where Freud was the featured lecturer at the twentieth-anniversary celebration of the founding of Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts, the Vicennial Conference on Psychology and Pedagogy, 7–11 September. Jung spoke as well and received an honorary degree.[43]

It was during this trip that Jung first began separating psychologically from Freud, his mentor, which occurred after intense communications around their individual dreams. It was during this visit that Jung was introduced to the elder philosopher and psychologist William James, known as the "Father of American psychology," whose ideas Jung would incorporate into his own work.[44] Jung connected with James around their mutual interests in mysticism, spiritualism and psychical phenomena.[45] James wrote to a friend after the conference stating Jung "left a favorable impression," while "his views of Freud were mixed." [46] James died about eleven months later.

The ideas of both Jung and James, on topics including hopelessness, self-surrender, and spiritual experiences, were influential in the development and founding of the international altruistic, self-help movement Alcoholics Anonymous on 10 June 1935, in Akron, Ohio, a quarter of a century after James' death and in Jung's sixtieth year.

For six years, Jung and Freud cooperated in their work. In 1912, however, Jung published *Psychology of the Unconscious*, which manifested the developing theoretical divergence between the two. Consequently, their personal and professional relationship fractured—each stating the other could not admit he could be wrong. After the culminating break in 1913, Jung went through a difficult and pivotal psychological transformation, exacerbated by the outbreak of the First World War. Henri Ellenberger

called Jung's intense experience a "creative illness" and compared it favorably to Freud's own period of what he called neurasthenia and hysteria.[47]: 173

Marriage

Emma Jung in 1911. She assisted her husband in his early research before becoming a psychoanalyst and author.

In 1903, Jung married Emma Rauschenbach (1882–1955), seven years his junior and the elder daughter of a wealthy industrialist in eastern Switzerland, Johannes Rauschenbach-Schenck.[48] Rauschenbach was the owner, among other concerns, of IWC Schaffhausen—the International Watch Company, manufacturer of luxury timepieces. Upon his death in 1905, his two daughters and their husbands became owners of the business. Jung's brother-in-law—Ernst Homberger—became the principal proprietor, but the Jungs remained shareholders in a thriving business that ensured the family's financial security for decades.[49] Emma Jung, whose education had been limited, showed considerable ability and interest in her husband's research and threw herself into studies and acted as his assistant at Burghölzli. She eventually became a noted psychoanalyst in her own right. The marriage lasted until Emma died in 1955.[50] He had five children:

Agathe Niehus, born on 28 December 1904

Gret Baumann, born on 8 February 1906

Franz Jung-Merker, born on 28 November 1908

Marianne Niehus, born on 20 September 1910

Helene Hoerni, born on 18 March 1914

None of the children continued their father's career. The daughters, Agathe and Marianne, assisted in publishing work.[51]

During his marriage, Jung engaged in at least one extramarital relationship: his affair with his patient and, later, fellow psychoanalyst Sabina Spielrein.[52][53][54] A continuing affair with Toni Wolff is also alleged.[55][56]

Relationship with Freud

See also: Psychoanalysis

Meeting and collaboration

Group photo 1909 in front of Clark University. Front row, Sigmund Freud, G. Stanley Hall, Carl Jung. Back row, Abraham Brill, Ernest Jones, Sándor Ferenczi.

Jung and Freud influenced each other during the intellectually formative years of Jung's life. Jung became interested in psychiatry as a student by reading *Psychopathia Sexualis* by Richard von Krafft-Ebing. In 1900, Jung completed his degree and started work as an intern (voluntary doctor) under the psychiatrist Eugen Bleuler at Burghölzli Hospital.[57] It was Bleuler who introduced him to the writings of Freud by asking him to write a review of *The Interpretation of Dreams* (1899). In the early 1900s psychology as a science was still in its early stages, but Jung became a qualified proponent of Freud's

new "psycho-analysis". Freud needed collaborators and pupils to validate and spread his ideas. Burghölzli was a renowned psychiatric clinic in Zurich, and Jung's research had already gained him international recognition. Jung sent Freud a copy of his *Studies in Word Association* in 1906.[58] The same year, he published *Diagnostic Association Studies*, a copy of which he later sent to Freud, who had already purchased a copy.[41] Preceded by a lively correspondence, Jung met Freud for the first time in Vienna on 3 March 1907.[59] Jung recalled the discussion between himself and Freud as interminable and unceasing for 13 hours.[60] Six months later, the then 50-year-old Freud sent a collection of his latest published essays to Jung in Zurich. This began an intense correspondence and collaboration that lasted six years.[61] In 1908, Jung became an editor of the newly founded *Yearbook for Psychoanalytical and Psychopathological Research*.

In 1909, Jung traveled with Freud and Hungarian psychoanalyst Sándor Ferenczi to the United States; in September, they took part in a conference at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts. The conference at Clark University was planned by the psychologist G. Stanley Hall and included 27 distinguished psychiatrists, neurologists, and psychologists. It represented a watershed in the acceptance of psychoanalysis in North America. This forged welcome links between Jung and influential Americans.[62] Jung returned to the United States the next year for a brief visit.

In 1910, Freud proposed Jung, "his adopted eldest son, his crown prince, and successor," for the position of lifetime President of the newly formed International Psychoanalytical Association. However, after forceful objections from his Viennese colleagues, it was agreed Jung would be elected to serve a two-year term of office.[63]

Divergence and break

Jung outside Burghölzli in 1910

While Jung worked on his *Psychology of the Unconscious: a study of the transformations and symbolisms of the libido*, tensions manifested between him and Freud because of various disagreements, including those concerning the nature of libido.[64] Jung de-emphasized the importance of sexual development and focused on the collective unconscious: the part of the unconscious that contains memories and ideas that Jung believed were inherited from ancestors. While he did think that the libido was an important source of personal growth, unlike Freud, Jung did not think that the libido alone was responsible for the formation of the core personality.[65]

In 1912, these tensions came to a peak because Jung felt severely slighted after Freud visited his colleague Ludwig Binswanger in Kreuzlingen without paying him a visit in nearby Zurich, an incident Jung referred to as "the Kreuzlingen gesture". Shortly thereafter, Jung again traveled to the US and gave the Fordham University lectures, a six-week series, which were published later in the year as *Psychology of the Unconscious*, subsequently republished as *Symbols of Transformation*. While they contain remarks on Jung's dissenting view on the libido, they represent largely a

"psychoanalytical Jung" and not the theory of analytical psychology, for which he became famous in the following decades. Nonetheless, it was their publication which, Jung declared, "cost me my friendship with Freud".[66]

Another disagreement with Freud stemmed from their differing concepts of the unconscious.[67] Jung saw Freud's theory of the unconscious as incomplete, unnecessarily negative, and inelastic. According to Jung, Freud conceived the unconscious solely as a repository of repressed emotions and desires.[68] Jung's observations overlap to an extent with Freud's model of the unconscious, what Jung called the "personal unconscious", but his hypothesis is more about a process than a static model, and he also proposed the existence of a second, overarching form of the unconscious beyond the personal, that he named the psychoid—a term borrowed from neo-vitalist philosopher and embryologist Hans Driesch (1867–1941)—but with a somewhat altered meaning.[69] The collective unconscious is not so much a 'geographical location', but a deduction from the alleged ubiquity of archetypes over space and time.[clarification needed]

In November 1912, Jung and Freud met in Munich for a meeting among prominent colleagues to discuss psychoanalytical journals.[70] At a talk about a new psychoanalytic essay on Amenhotep IV, Jung expressed his views on how it related to actual conflicts in the psychoanalytic movement. While Jung spoke, Freud suddenly fainted, and Jung carried him to a couch.[68]

Jung and Freud personally met for the last time in September 1913 at the Fourth International Psychoanalytical Congress in Munich. Jung gave a talk on psychological types, the introvert and extraverted types, in analytical psychology.

Midlife isolation

It was the publication of Jung's book *The Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1912 that led to the final break with Freud. The letters they exchanged show Freud's refusal to consider Jung's ideas. This rejection caused what Jung described in his posthumously published autobiography, *Memories, Dreams, Reflections* (1962) as a "resounding censure". Everyone he knew dropped away from him except two of his colleagues. After the Munich congress, he was on the verge of a suicidal psychosis that precipitated his writing of his *Red Book*, his seven-volume personal diaries that were only published partially and posthumously in 2009. Eleven years later, in 2020, they were published as his *Black Books*. Jung described his 1912 book as "an attempt, only partially successful, to create a wider setting for medical psychology and to bring the whole of the psychic phenomena within its purview". The book was later revised and retitled *Symbols of Transformation* in 1952.[71]

London 1913–1914

Jung spoke at meetings of the Psycho-Medical Society in London in 1913 and 1914. His travels were soon interrupted by the war, but his ideas continued to receive attention in England primarily through the efforts of Constance Long, who translated and published

the first English volume of his collected writings.[72][73]

The Black Books and The Red Book

Main articles: The Red Book (Jung) and Black Books (Jung)

The Red Book resting on Jung's desk

In 1913, at the age of 38, Jung experienced a horrible "confrontation with the unconscious". He saw visions and heard voices. He worried at times that he was "menaced by a psychosis" or was "doing a schizophrenia". He decided that it was a valuable experience and, in private, he induced hallucinations or, in his words, a process of "active imagination". He recorded everything he experienced in small journals, which Jung referred to in the singular as his Black Book,[74] considering it a "single integral whole", even though some of these original journals have a brown cover.[74] The material Jung wrote was subjected to several edits, hand-written and typed, including another, "second layer" of text, his continual psychological interpretations during the process of editing.[75][76] Around 1915, Jung commissioned a large red leather-bound book,[77][78] and began to transcribe his notes and paint, working intermittently for sixteen years.[9]

Jung left no posthumous instructions about the final disposition of what he called the Liber Novus or Red Book. Sonu Shamdasani, a historian of psychology from London, tried for three years to persuade Jung's resistant heirs to have it published. Ulrich Hoerni, Jung's grandson who manages the Jung archives, decided to publish it when the necessary additional funds were raised through the Philemon Foundation.[9] Up to September 2008, fewer than about two dozen people had ever seen it.

In 2007, two technicians for DigitalFusion, working with New York City publishers W. W. Norton & Company, scanned the manuscript with a 10,200-pixel scanner. It was published on 7 October 2009 in German, with a "separate English translation along with Shamdasani's introduction and footnotes" at the back of the book. According to Sara Corbett, reviewing the text for The New York Times, "The book is bombastic, baroque and like so much else about Carl Jung, a willful oddity, synched with an antediluvian and mystical reality." [9]

The Rubin Museum of Art in New York City displayed Jung's Red Book leather folio, as well as some of his original "Black Book" journals, from 7 October 2009 to 15 February 2010.[79] According to them, "During the period in which he worked on this book Jung developed his principal theories of archetypes, collective unconscious, and the process of individuation." Two-thirds of the pages bear Jung's illuminations and illustrations to the text.[79]

Wartime army service

During World War I, Jung was drafted as an army doctor and soon made commandant of an internment camp for British officers and soldiers. The Swiss were neutral and obliged to intern personnel from either side of the conflict, who crossed their frontier to

evade capture. Jung worked to improve the conditions of soldiers stranded in Switzerland and encouraged them to attend university courses.[80][81]

Travels

Jung emerged from his period of isolation in the late 1910s with the publication of several journal articles, followed in 1921 with *Psychological Types*, one of his most influential books. There followed a decade of active publication, interspersed with overseas travels.

England (1920, 1923, 1925, 1935, 1938, 1946)

Constance Long arranged for Jung to deliver a seminar in Cornwall in 1920. Another seminar was held in 1923, this one organized by Jung's British protégé Helton Godwin Baynes (known as "Peter") (1882–1943), and another in 1925.[82]

Beatrice Ensor and Jung in Montreux, Switzerland, 1923, for the Second International New Education Fellowship Conference

In 1935, at the invitation of his close British friends and colleagues, H. G. Baynes, E. A. Bennet and Hugh Crichton-Miller, Jung gave a series of lectures at the Tavistock Clinic in London, later published as part of the *Collected Works*. [83]

In 1938, Jung was awarded an honorary degree by the University of Oxford.[84] At the tenth International Medical Congress for Psychotherapy held at Oxford from 29 July to 2 August 1938, Jung gave the presidential address, followed by a visit to Cheshire to stay with the Bailey family at Lawton Mere.[85]

In 1946, Jung agreed to become the first Honorary President of the newly formed Society of Analytical Psychology in London, having previously approved its training programme devised by Michael Fordham.[86]

United States 1909–1912, 1924–1925, & 1936–1937

During the period of Jung's collaboration with Freud, both visited the US in 1909 to lecture at Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts,[62] where both were awarded honorary degrees. In 1912, Jung gave a series of lectures at Fordham University, New York, which were published later in the year as *Psychology of the Unconscious*. [66] Jung made a more extensive trip westward in the winter of 1924–5, financed and organized by Fowler McCormick and George Porter. Of particular value to Jung was a visit with Chief Mountain Lake of the Taos Pueblo near Taos, New Mexico.[82] Jung made another trip to America in 1936, receiving an honorary degree at Harvard[87] and giving lectures in New York and New England for his growing group of American followers. He returned in 1937 to deliver the Terry Lectures at Yale University, later published as *Psychology and Religion*. [88]

East Africa

In October 1925, Jung embarked on his most ambitious expedition, the "Bugishu

Psychological Expedition" to East Africa. He was accompanied by his English friend, "Peter" Baynes, and an American associate, George Beckwith. On the voyage to Africa, they became acquainted with an English woman named Ruth Bailey, who joined their safari a few weeks later. The group traveled through Kenya and Uganda to the slopes of Mount Elgon, where Jung hoped to increase his understanding of "primitive psychology" through conversations with the culturally isolated residents of that area. Later, he concluded that the major insights he had gleaned had to do with himself and the European psychology in which he had been raised.[89][90] One of Jung's most famous proposed constructs is kinship libido. Jung defined this as an instinctive feeling of belonging to a particular group or family and believed it was vital to the human experience and used this as an endogamous aspect of the libido and what lies amongst the family. This is similar to a Bantu term called Ubuntu that emphasizes humanity and almost the same meaning as kinship libido, which is, "I am because you are." [91]

India

Jung in about 1935

In December 1937, Jung left Zurich again for an extensive tour of India with Fowler McCormick. In India, he felt himself "under the direct influence of a foreign culture" for the first time. In Africa, his conversations had been strictly limited by the language barrier, but he could converse extensively in India. Hindu philosophy became an important element in his understanding of the role of symbolism and the life of the unconscious, though he avoided a meeting with Ramana Maharshi. He described Ramana as being absorbed in "the self". During these travels, he visited the Vedagiriswarar Temple, where he had a conversation with a local expert about the symbols and sculptures on the gopuram of this temple. He later wrote about this conversation [92] in his book *Aion*. [93] Jung became seriously ill on this trip and endured two weeks of delirium in a Calcutta hospital. After 1938, his travels were confined to Europe. [94]

Later life and death

Jung in a 1955 interview

Jung became a full professor of medical psychology at the University of Basel in 1943 but resigned after a heart attack the next year to lead a more private life. In 1945, he began corresponding with an English Roman Catholic priest, Father Victor White, who became a close friend, regularly visiting the Jungs at the Bollingen estate. [1] Jung became ill again in 1952. [95]

Jung continued to publish books until the end of his life, including *Flying Saucers: A Modern Myth of Things Seen in the Skies* (1959), which analyzed the archetypal meaning and possible psychological significance of the reported observations of UFOs. [96] In 1961, he wrote his last work, a contribution to *Man and His Symbols* entitled "Approaching the Unconscious" (published posthumously in 1964). [95] Jung died on 6 June 1961 at Küsnacht after a short illness. [47]:450 [97] He had been beset by

circulatory diseases.[98]

Awards

Among his principal distinctions are honorary doctorates from:

Clark University 1909

Fordham University 1912

Harvard University 1936

University of Allahabad 1937

University of Benares 1937

University of Calcutta 1938

University of Oxford 1938

University of Geneva 1945

Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich 1955 on his 80th birthday

In addition, he was:

given a Literature prize from the city of Zurich, 1932

made Titular Professor of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich, ETH 1935

appointed Honorary Member of the Royal Society of Medicine 1939

given a Festschrift at Eranos 1945

appointed President of the Society of Analytical Psychology, London, 1946

given a Festschrift by students and friends 1955

named Honorary citizen of Kúsnacht 1960, on his 85th birthday.[99]

Thought

Jung's family, c. 1895: l to r. father Paul, sister Gertrud, mother Emilie and Carl
Jung's thought derived from the classical education he received at school and from early family influences, which on the maternal side were a combination of Reformed Protestant academic theology with an interest in occult phenomena. On his father's side was a dedication to academic discipline emanating from his grandfather, the physician, scientist, and first Basel Professor of Medicine, Karl Gustav Jung, a one-time student activist and convert from Catholicism to Swiss Reformed Protestantism. Family lore suggested there was at least a social connection to the German polymath, Johann Wolfgang Goethe, through the latter's niece, Lotte Kestner, known as "Lottchen", who was a frequent visitor in Jung senior's household.[100]

Carl Jung, the practicing clinician, writer, and founder of analytical psychology, had, through his marriage, the economic security to pursue interests in other intellectual topics of the moment. His early celebrity as a research scientist through the Word Association Test led to the start of prolific correspondence and worldwide travel. It opened academic as well as social avenues, supported by his explorations into anthropology, quantum physics, vitalism, Eastern and Western philosophy. He delved into epistemology, alchemy, astrology, and sociology, as well as literature and the arts. Jung's interest in philosophy and spiritual subjects led many to label him a mystic, although he preferred to be seen as a man of science. Jung, unlike Freud, was deeply

knowledgeable about philosophical concepts and sought links between epistemology and emergent theories of psychology.[101][102]

Key concepts

C. G. Jung Institute, Küsnacht, Switzerland

Within the field of analytical psychology, a brief survey of major concepts developed by Jung includes (alphabetical):[103]

Anima and animus—(archetype) the contrasexual aspect of a person's psyche. In a woman's psyche, her inner personal masculine is conceived as a complex and an archetypal image; in a man's psyche, his inner personal feminine is conceived both as a complex and an archetypal image.

Archetype—a concept "borrowed" from anthropology to denote supposedly universal and recurring mental images or themes. Jung's descriptions of archetypes varied over time.

Archetypal images—universal symbols that mediate opposites in the psyche, often found in religious art, mythology, and fairy tales across cultures.

Collective unconscious—aspects of unconsciousness experienced by all people in different cultures.

Complex—the repressed organisation of images and experiences that governs perception and behaviour.

Extraversion and introversion—personality traits of degrees of openness or reserve contributing to psychological type.[104]

Individuation—the process of fulfilment of each individual "which negates neither the conscious or [sic] unconscious position but does justice to them both".[105]

Interpersonal relationship—the way people relate to others reflects how they relate to themselves. This may also be extended to relations with the natural environment.

Numinous—a healing, transformative or destructive spiritual power. Also, an invisible power inherent in an object. Jung develops the concept from the work of Rudolf Otto, who based it on the Latin numen.

Persona—element of the personality that arises "for reasons of adaptation or personal convenience"—the "masks" one puts on in various situations.[106]

Psychological types—a framework for consciously orienting psychotherapists to patients by raising particular modes of personality to consciousness and differentiation between analyst and patient.

Shadow—(archetype) the repressed, therefore unknown, aspects of the personality, including those often considered to be negative.

Self—(archetype) the central overarching concept governing the individuation process, as symbolised by mandalas, the union of male and female, totality, and unity. Jung viewed it as the psyche's central archetype.

Synchronicity—an acausal principle as a basis for the apparently random concurrence of phenomena.[107]

Collective unconscious

Main article: Collective unconscious

Since the establishment of psychoanalytic theory, the notion and meaning of individuals having a personal unconscious has gradually come to be commonly accepted. This was popularised by both Freud and Jung. Whereas an individual's personal unconscious is made up of thoughts and emotions that have, at some time, been experienced or held in mind but which have been repressed or forgotten, in contrast, the collective unconscious is neither acquired by activities within an individual's life nor a container of things that are thoughts, memories or ideas which are capable of being conscious during one's life. The contents of it were never naturally "known" through physical or cognitive experience and then forgotten.

The collective unconscious consists of universal heritable elements common to all humans, distinct from other species.[108] However, this does not necessarily imply a genetic cause. It encapsulates fields of evolutionary biology, history of civilization, ethnology, brain and nervous system development, and general psychological development.[109] Considering its composition in practical physiological and psychological terms, "it consists of pre-existent forms, the archetypes, which can only become conscious secondarily and which give definite form to certain psychic contents." [109] Jung writes about causal factors in personal psychology as stemming from, influenced by an abstraction of the impersonal physical layer, the common and universal physiology among all humans.[110] Jung considers that science would hardly deny the existence and basic nature of "instincts", existing as a whole set of motivating urges. The collective unconscious acts as the frame where science can distinguish individual motivating urges, thought to be universal across all individuals of the human species, while instincts are present in all species. Jung contends, "The hypothesis of the collective unconscious is, therefore, no more daring than to assume there are instincts." [109]

Archetype

Main article: Jungian archetypes

Isis, The Great mother of divine son Horus Demeter, Great Mother of divine daughter Persephone Lao Tzu, Wise Old Man Christ, Hero

Common archetypal motifs: Devourer, Great/Benevolent Mother, Wise Old Man, Hero/Self

The archetype is a concept "borrowed" from anthropology to denote a process of nature. Jung's definitions of archetypes varied over time and have been the subject of debate regarding their usefulness. Archetypal images, also referred to as motifs in mythology,[d] are universal symbols that can mediate opposites in the psyche, are often found in religious art, mythology and fairy tales across cultures. Jung saw archetypes as pre-configurations in nature that give rise to repeating, understandable, describable experiences. In addition, the concept considers the passage of time and patterns resulting from transformation.[111] Archetypes are said to exist independently of any current event or its effect. They are said to exert influence both across all domains of experience and throughout the stages of each individual's unique development. Being in part based on heritable physiology, they are thought to have "existed" since humans became a differentiated species. They have been deduced through the development of

storytelling over tens of thousands of years, indicating repeating patterns of individual and group experience, behaviors, and effects across the planet, apparently displaying common themes.[109]

The concept did not originate with Jung but with Plato, who first conceived of primordial patterns. Later contributions came from Adolf Bastian and Hermann Usener, among others.[112] In the first half of the twentieth century, it proved impossible to objectively isolate and categorize the notion of an archetype within a materialist frame. According to Jung, there are "as many archetypes as there are typical situations in life",[113] and he asserted that they have a dynamic mutual influence on one another. Their alleged presence could be extracted from thousand-year-old narratives, from comparative religion, and from mythology.[114] Jung elaborated on many archetypes in "The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious" and in "Aion: Researches into the Phenomenology of the Self". Examples of archetypes might be the shadow, the hero, the self, anima, animus, mother, father, child, and trickster.

Shadow

See also: shadow (psychology)

The shadow exists as part of the unconscious mind and is composed of the traits individuals instinctively or consciously resist identifying as their own and would rather ignore, typically repressed ideas, weaknesses, desires, instincts, and shortcomings. Much of the shadow comes as a result of an individual's adaptation to cultural norms and expectations.[106] Thus, this archetype not only consists of all the things deemed unacceptable by society but also those things that are not aligned with one's own personal morals and values.

Jung argues that the shadow plays a distinctive role in balancing one's overall psyche, the counter-balancing to consciousness—"where there is light, there must also be shadow". Without a well-developed shadow (often "shadow work", "integrating one's shadow"), an individual can become shallow and extremely preoccupied with the opinions of others; that is, a walking persona.[106] Not wanting to look at their shadows directly, Jung argues, often results in psychological projection. Individuals project imagined attitudes onto others without awareness. The qualities an individual may hate (or love) in another may manifest in those who do not see the external, material truth. [106] In order to truly grow as an individual, Jung believed that both the persona and shadow should be balanced.[106]

The shadow can often appear as a dark, wild, exotic figure in dreams or visions.[115]

Extraversion and introversion

Main article: Extraversion and introversion

See also: Apollonian and Dionysian

Jung was one of the first to define introversion and extraversion in a psychological context. In Jung's *Psychological Types*, he theorizes that each person falls into one of two categories: the introvert or the extravert. Jung compares these two psychological

types to ancient archetypes, Apollo and Dionysus. The introvert is likened to Apollo, who shines a light on understanding. The introvert is focused on the internal world of reflection, dreaming, and vision. Thoughtful and insightful, the introvert can sometimes be uninterested in joining the activities of others. The extravert is associated with Dionysus, interested in joining the activities of the world. The extravert is focused on the outside world of objects, sensory perception, and action. Energetic and lively, the extravert may lose their sense of self in the intoxication of Dionysian pursuits.[116] Jungian introversion and extraversion is quite different from the modern idea of introversion and extraversion.[117] Modern theories often stay true to behaviourist means of describing such a trait (sociability, talkativeness, assertiveness, etc.), whereas Jungian introversion and extraversion are expressed as a perspective: introverts interpret the world subjectively, whereas extraverts interpret the world objectively.[118]

Persona

See also: Persona (psychology)

In his psychological theory—which is not necessarily linked to a particular theory of social structure—the persona appears as a consciously created personality or identity, fashioned out of part of the collective psyche through socialization, acculturation and experience.[119] Jung applied the term persona explicitly because, in Latin, it means both personality and the masks worn by Roman actors of the classical period, expressive of the individual roles played.

The persona, he argues, is a mask for the "collective psyche", a mask that 'pretends' individuality so that both self and others believe in that identity, even if it is really no more than a well-played role through which the collective psyche is expressed. Jung regarded the "persona-mask" as a complicated system that mediates between individual consciousness and the social community: it is "a compromise between the individual and society as to what a man should appear to be".[120] But he also makes it quite explicit that it is, in substance, a character mask in the classical sense known to theatre, with its double function: both intended to make a certain impression on others and to hide (part of) the true nature of the individual.[121] The therapist then aims to assist the individuation process through which the client (re)gains their "own self"—by liberating the self, both from the deceptive cover of the persona and from the power of unconscious impulses.

Jung has influenced management theory because managers and executives create an appropriate "management persona" (a corporate mask) and a persuasive identity,[122] and they have to evaluate what sort of people the workers are, to manage them (for example, using personality tests and peer reviews).[123]

Evolutionary thought

Of his early years, Jung would write that "mentally my greatest adventure had been the study of Kant and Schopenhauer. The great news of the day was the work of Charles Darwin." [124] While Jung's conception of human psychology is grounded in Darwinian evolutionary theory, it is important to note that his evolutionary thought had a